



Why lawyers are at loggerheads

Cover story

The rugby scrum that left a boy's life in ruins

Living

The heart and sole of British style

Fashion

Railtrack in 'fat cat' row over bonuses

Labour fury over sweeteners

PETER RODGERS and CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

Six directors of Railtrack may get bonuses of up to 100 per cent of their salaries under an incentive scheme that could add £900,000 to the board's earnings and which is bound to provoke new opposition to the Government's troubled rail privatisation.

The bonuses – to be paid in shares in the privatised company – come despite a promise by Robert Horton, chairman of Railtrack, to ban "fat cat" rewards by eschewing share options.

The prospectus for the sale of Railtrack published yesterday gives details of the long-term incentive scheme. The payments exclude options and instead will be made by the company through the purchase of shares to be given to directors and top executives. This is on top of annual bonuses for the board of up to 40 per cent of basic salary.

Angered by the incentive scheme and by a decision to sweeten the privatisation with a £69m dividend paid out of last year's profits – when the company was state-owned – Labour said it would mount an attempt to overturn the Government's one-vote majority in tomorrow's Commons debate. It will try to block the sale by marshalling support from Ulster Unionist MPs and Tories unhappy with rail policy.

The sale includes an unprecedented array of sweeteners to ensure successful privatisation, with discounts and bonus shares as well as the £69m extra dividend.

The Opposition's transport spokeswoman, Clare Short, condemned the sell-off, saying privatisation would damage the country's rail network and drive more people on to the roads. She said: "We believe that it's a grave breach of the national interest to sell off all our signalling, the tracks and stations in every town and city in the land at a very, very cheap price."

The controversial directors'

incentive scheme requires directors to use half their annual bonuses to buy shares in Railtrack. After three years, the company will award each director a multiple of the shares he has bought, based on two key measures.

These are the growth in the company's earnings per share and a separate measure of how far Railtrack has achieved performance targets.

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
KEVIN MILLER TAX PAYER JAMES	RAILTRACK BRAVU TRAIN

The maximum payout each year would be five times the amount of shares the director has bought. The view in the City was that the targets were demanding but achievable.

The prospectus said the directors had been given an ordinary bonus of 17.2 per cent in 1994-5, after the Government reduced it from the 25 per cent estimated by the board. For the year just ended, a 30 per cent bonus has been set, 75 per cent of the maximum.

John Edmonds, the chief executive, has the highest basic salary at £168,000, and is the only one to get a rise this year – of £26,000.

While Labour is not committing itself to renationalisation, the party is convinced that its campaign against the sale will dampen down enthusiasm among the general public to buy shares.

The party launches an advertising campaign today on the theme of The Great Train

Robbery, with the claim that privatisation is costing every taxpayer £103.

Ms Short said it would be "irresponsible" for Labour simply to threaten potential investors it would take back Railtrack if it won power. Railtrack argues that the prime reason for selling 100 per cent of the shares was not to make it harder for a future Labour government to re-nationalise the network, but to do what was right for the railway industry.

While Labour is unlikely to win Wednesday's vote, Tory MPs with doubts about the break-up of the railways were given more ammunition by figures revealed by the Capital Transport Campaign last night which showed that more than 70 per cent of passenger services in London and the south-east have deteriorated since the break-up of BR in 1994.

An alliance of unions and pressure groups opposed to privatisation said they were considering legal action over the £69m dividend, which will be shared by new shareholders in October.

Jonathan Bray, co-ordinator of the Save Our Railways group, which late last year mounted a partially successful legal action against the sell-off said: "The Government is so desperate to make a success of the sale that they plan to bribe investors with a £70m sweetener. We will be taking this issue up with our lawyers."

SOR launches a separate legal action today when it starts proceedings against the franchise director, Roger Salmon, over his decision to bar British Rail from bidding for the LTS franchise whose allocation was held up following revelations of a fraud.

Details were also released of a poll which claimed that half of Railtrack's senior managers and more than four out of five of its middle managers were opposed to the rapid sell-off of the company.

The price of success, page 2
Leading article, page 14

Agony of the people as bombing empties Lebanese villages



A woman in Nabatiyet breaks down after being told that two young relatives had been killed during the Israeli aerial and artillery offensive

Israelis blast power station

ROBERT FISK, Beirut

Ignoring France's initiative to halt the onslaught on Lebanon, Israel yesterday destroyed another of the country's key power plants, setting the electricity station in the Metn hills ablaze while opening a missile bombardment on the southern port of Tyre.

Beirut's power supply was cut by two thirds after an Israeli helicopter fired a rocket into the station at Baaleem outside the Christian eastern suburbs of Beirut – an area into which no Hizbollah has ever set foot – sending a two-mile column of smoke over the Mediterranean.

Lebanese and Syrian anti-aircraft batteries have now been positioned across west Beirut in apparent readiness for what so

many Lebanese fear: an Israeli attack on the international airport. Five passenger airlines, including the regular Middle East Airlines flight from London, were forced to circle the city for 90 minutes during the afternoon as Israeli helicopters staged another raid over the southern suburbs of the city, wounding one man when they fired missiles into two buildings.

Throughout the day, anti-aircraft batteries fired repeatedly into the sky over the capital as Israeli jets made reconnaissance flights across Beirut.

In Paris, the Lebanese prime minister spoke gloomily of the end of the Middle East peace process while the United Nations in southern Lebanon logged a significant increase in the fighting by both sides. In the 24 hours ending at

5am yesterday, Israel had fired 4,000 shells into the UN zone alone, 52 of them landing close to UN positions. For their part, the Hizbollah – supposedly targeted by "surgical strikes" from Israeli aircraft – mounted their heaviest daily retaliation bombardment yet against northern Israel: 90 Katyusha rockets fired off towards Galilee.

Other reports suggest that the Hizbollah may have fired as many as 400 Katyushas at Israel in 24 hours, including rockets fired from north of the Litani river, further proof that the guerrilla force has not been cowed by the Israeli attack. Since the offensive began on 11 April, not one Hizbollah member or Israeli soldier has been reported killed. The dead comprise 23 civilians, two Lebanese soldiers and a Syrian officer.

In a transmission that probably had its eye on CNN retransmission rather than reality, Hizbollah's television station showed film of around 50 young men with their faces blackened and with what appeared to be explosives strapped to their chests, announcing that they formed a special "martyrs brigade" which would attack Israeli targets and "American interests" in retaliation for US support for the Israeli attacks.

By dusk, Beirut was starting to resemble the old civil war capital, its highways deserted, its unkempt gardens the home of anti-aircraft guns. Power cuts stopped mains water pumps. Given the air attacks on the two electricity stations over the past two days – the only "surgical strikes" Israel has actually undertaken – the collapse of the city's infrastructure is clearly what the Israelis intend.

Divisions in EU, page 9

Hopes for feelgood factor get triple boost

DIANE COYLE, Economics Editor

Government hopes for a return of the "feelgood factor" received a boost yesterday thanks to evidence of a livelier housing market, a jump in retail spending and further good news on inflation.

Activity in the housing market in March was the strongest for two years, according to a survey of estate agents. Four out of five said the number of viewings and enquiries had risen by 10 per cent or more.

A separate survey showed a surge in spending on the high street, which was 7.5 per cent higher than the same month a year earlier even after adjusting for the impact of an early Easter. Official figures also showed the increase in prices charged by manufacturers at the factory gate declined to its lowest since December 1994.

The prospect of faster growth without inflation helped take shares in London to a record high last night.

The housing market is showing signs of underlying strength,

according to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. In a typical comment, Robert Corrick, an estate agent in Newport, Gwent, said: "After too many false dawns this decade, we are now cautiously advising buyers and sellers that signs of improvement in the property market are starting to show."

Nearly a fifth of the estate agents reported modest house price increases, although most said prices remained flat. But many said houses still had to be realistically priced to sell.

The upbeat survey follows the

Halifax building society's recent report that house prices rose for the eighth month running in March, the longest sustained increase since 1989.

The brighter news on the housing front coincided with a survey of retailers showing a much stronger trend in high street spending last month.

The amount spent on retail sales surged by 7.5 per cent in the year to March. Adjusting for Easter, which had a big impact on DIY, food and electrical sales, the year-on-year increase remained a buoyant 4.5-5.0 per

cent. It was concentrated on electrical goods, household items and furniture.

Hugh Clark, trading policy director of the British Retail Consortium, said: "We are particularly encouraged to see this happen before people get the benefits of the tax cuts."

He added: "Our members are detecting a distinct improvement in consumer confidence." Lower mortgage rates would continue to help retail spending, he said.

The sparks of recovery in consumer spending have shown

no signs yet of setting off higher inflation. Official figures yesterday revealed that prices charged by manufacturers at the factory gate rose 3.4 per cent in the year to March, the lowest annual increase since the end of 1994.

Beef prices at the producer level dropped 0.9 per cent in March thanks to the mad cow scare, but other meat prices jumped by 5.3 per cent, meaning prices charged by food producers climbed 1.2 per cent overall.

Footsie record, page 16

IN BRIEF

'Bristol' goes west

The Bristol & West, Britain's ninth largest building society was sold to the Bank of Ireland for £600m yesterday. Page 16

Professor accused

A theology professor in the Free Church of Scotland has denied six charges of indecent assault. Page 3



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RODDY DOYLE

THE

WOMAN WHO WALKED INTO DOORS



Grey period: United's Ryan Giggs in the ill-fated strip

United drop grey strip after black day

NICK DUXBURY

Manchester United's grey football kit yesterday became a collector's item as the "strip they couldn't see" was consigned to the dustbin after less than a season.

The outfit, which adorned the likes of Cantona and Giggs on United's appearances away from their home ground of Old Trafford, was blamed for a string of disappointing results and will be replaced by an all-white version.

United are on the verge of winning the Premiership title –

the biggest prize in football – despite having lost four and drawn one of the five games in which the unlucky, two-tone design had been worn.

The last straw came on Saturday at Southampton when, after going in three goals down at half-time, the United manager, Alex Ferguson, ordered a switch to the team's blue and white third kit. The changed worked, but only partially as United lost 3-1.

"The players couldn't pick each other out," Ferguson said. "They said it was difficult to see their team-mates at distance

when they lifted their heads. It was nothing to do with superstition. This club went 26 years without winning the league and we didn't think about changing the red shirts. It's nothing to do with that at all."

Thousands of parents, who bought the Umbro-manufactured grey shirts – priced £29.99 and £39.99 – for their children, will now have to finance the change to white, although Umbro has attempted to soften the blow by reducing the price by £10.

However, England's biggest and wealthiest club – the kit deal

with Umbro is worth £80m over six years – were already committed to bringing out a new version of their traditional red shirt for next season and will change the blue and white third kit at the turn of the year.

Tony Kershaw, the secretary of the National Federation of Football Supporters' Clubs, said: "You can only sum it up as a rip-off. Changing all three kits in the course of one season is totally unfair to the fans of all age groups, not just children. United fans will want to have all three kits and they are just being taken for a ride."

2
news

Railtrack flotation: Labour spokesman pulls out of interviews while Government raises stakes

Short tax row blunts attack on rail sell-off

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Senior aides of Tony Blair, the Labour leader, last night made it clear that Clare Short would not be sacked after she fuelled further anger in the Blair camp over her remarks on tax.

However, long-term doubts remained about her chances of gaining a place in a Blair Cabinet, if Labour win office, after she defiantly said: "I will not be silenced."

She pulled out of a series of interviews on the privatisation of Railtrack yesterday, although she is Labour's leading spokesman on transport, because of the row over her remarks on tax.

A Tony Blair aide said: "If I'd seen her today I would have given her a big hug and a kiss. We were in real trouble until she opened her mouth."

Labour leadership sources were angry last night that Ms Short's remarks blunted Labour's attack on the flotation of Railtrack yesterday, and deflected attention from Mr Blair's successful Washington trip and Labour's triumphant by-election victory in Staffordshire South East.

"We were on a roll until this happened," said a senior Labour source. It threatens to undermine Labour's attack on the Tories over the privatisation of Railtrack in a full-scale Commons debate which Ms Short will open tomorrow.



Clare Short: Politicians should take a moral stand

The Blair sources were doubly irritated that after making the remarks at the weekend on GMTV, she allowed the row to revive for a second day by seeking to defend them on BBC radio as a stand of principle.

Ms Short said politicians had to take a moral stand. She also dismissed criticism from the Blair camp that she had been "unprofessional" to suggest that "people like me" should pay more in tax.

As Labour tried to limit the damage, a senior Blair aide said: "Clare is not going to leave the Shadow Cabinet."

Ms Short accused the press of "a conspiracy to stop politicians talking honestly - so you get robots who just clone what they're told to say out of press releases."

"And someone like me, who

says what I really think, is supposed to be quiet and not speak the truth. And I will not be silenced."

John Prescott, the deputy leader of the party, said she had accepted the collective responsibility of the Shadow Cabinet.

He added: "I think everyone of us in the Shadow Cabinet likes to speak their minds on occasions. I have been known to do it myself. But there is Shadow Cabinet responsibility and all of us have to take that into account. And I am reassured that Clare, in her view, actually put forward the collectively responsible policy of the Shadow Cabinet."

"She has made that clear. She has been somewhat annoyed at the mischievous way her remarks have been interpreted in the press."

"Clare has made one or two personal remarks about her own personal situation. She is entitled to make a personal remark."

"Tony Blair has a serious problem on his hands," said a spokesman for Conservative Central Office.

"He either has to tell the truth about Labour's tax plans or sack Clare Short."

"People want to know what taxes they will have to pay under a Labour government. He has to tell the truth. Middle income families, all families, want an answer," the spokesman added.

Leading article, page 14



For sale: The Cambridge to London rail line in mid-Essex. Labour leaders fear Clare Short's remarks on tax have blunted their attack on Railtrack flotation. Photograph: Brian Harris

IRA bus bomb was old and unstable

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

The IRA bomb that accidentally detonated on a bus in central London, killing the terrorist carrying it, went off because it was an old device that had been badly maintained, police have concluded.

Commander John Grieve, head of the Anti-Terrorist Squad, is expected to reveal this today at the inquest into the death of the bomber, Edward O'Brien. He will also disclose that O'Brien, contrary to earlier reports, was not an inexperienced "lilywhite", but a hardened terrorist responsible for several other attacks.

It is also understood that all the film from the closed-circuit camera fitted on the No 171 double decker was destroyed during the explosion at the Aldwych. Until now, it has remained a mystery as to whether the Anti-Terrorist Branch had pictures of O'Brien and any other IRA operatives boarding the bus, which was reduced to a pile of twisted metal when the 5lb Semtex bomb detonated at 10.30pm on 18 February.

Security sources believe O'Brien, 21, may have been intending to target the nearby Law Courts. Grieve is expected to tell the inquest, which reopens at Westminster Coroner's Court, that the bomb was almost certainly one left over from the previous IRA bombing campaign, and was probably about three years old.

Fragments of the device found scattered around the wreckage indicated that the device was old and badly maintained, making it very unstable. Anti-terrorist officers also recovered O'Brien's handgun close to the bus.

Anti-terrorist officers were able quickly to find O'Brien's flat in Lewisham, south-east London, through documents discovered on his body. Enough Semtex and bomb-making equipment were found at his home and buried in the garden to make a further 20 devices.

The bus explosion was the third of four IRA attacks that have taken place since the 17-month ceasefire was broken in February by the huge Docklands bombing. Cdr Grieve is known to be satisfied with the progress of the investigation into the Docklands bombing. It was revealed in the *Independent on Sunday* that several witnesses who may be able to identify the terrorists have been found by anti-terrorist officers. Some are on the fringes of the East End underworld and spotted the bombers in the final stages of their mission.

IN BRIEF

Flesh-eating bug kills new mother

A mother who contracted a flesh-eating bug has died in hospital. Jill Maskell, 29, developed necrotising fasciitis days after giving birth to a healthy baby girl at Hillingdon Hospital, London. She was transferred to Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, for pioneering oxygen treatment in a recompression chamber.

Necrotising fasciitis is caused by a common bacteria which in rare cases attacks muscle and fat. There are around 50 cases in Britain each year, and the bug caused 12 deaths in 1995. Mrs Maskell, of Harlington, west London, became ill soon after having her baby and went back into hospital two weeks later.

Cup tickets stolen

Raiders stole 170 tickets for next month's FA Cup Final after breaking into Manchester United's stadium. Fans who buy the tickets on the black market will not be admitted to Wembley on 11 May, when United meet Liverpool. The club and the FA will list the ticket numbers and circulate them before the game.

Minister's pledge

The Government has no plans to abolish the Department of Transport despite passing much of its work to outside agencies, the Transport Secretary Sir George Young insisted. The DOT's abolition is believed to be supported by the Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry, which could take over some of its functions.

Abuse case plea

A leading barrister has called for a public inquiry into allegations of abuse at children's homes in Chwyd, north Wales. Allan Levy QC, who chaired the Staffordshire Shipdown inquiry, also demanded publication of a suppressed report on the case. The Welsh Secretary, William Hague, is expected to announce a decision later this week.

Extradition hitch

Attempts to extradite IRA suspect Anthony Duncanson from the Irish Republic face a delay of several months. The first application failed at the weekend because of flawed documents. Duncanson, 26, from Dublin, was re-arrested and accused of IRA membership. That charge must be dealt with in the Irish courts before a new extradition bid.

Culpable germicide

Pest controllers sprayed a magistrates' court with germicide after an archaic defendant spotted a giant spider. Officials feared it was a tarantula lost by another defendant at the Huddersfield court five months ago. Justice clerk Michael Wilson said: "We have to consider public safety."

Mr Ben Silcock

Our article "NHS accused over mentally ill killers" (15 January) referred to Mr Ben Silcock, the man mauled when he climbed into London Zoo's lion enclosure. We wish to make it clear no suggestion was intended that Mr Silcock had killed any one. We apologise to Mr Silcock for any distress caused.

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Sweeteners offered to make sale success

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The Government yesterday displayed its determination to make the Railtrack sale a success in the face of threats from the Labour Party to toughen controls on the company. A £69m additional dividend, to be paid in October out of profits made while Railtrack was state owned, is one of a number of sweeteners designed to make the privatisation more attractive.

City analysts said the Government has structured the £1.8bn sale to give returns in the first year, both from dividends and discounts, above those seen in most previous privatisations, and four or five times as high as a building society. This does

not mean an investment in Railtrack is as safe as building society, because the value of the shares can go up or down. But the high initial returns could underpin the value of the shares in the stock market.

The signs so far are that the marketing drive is having an impact. SBC Warburg, the investment bank handling the sale, said 910,000 potential investors had registered by last Thursday with share shops run by 110 banks, building societies and other financial companies involved in the sale. Only those registered get special discounts and bonus shares.

The number includes 140,000 private clients automatically registered by the share shops, but even so is well above the lev-

el expected in the early stages of the marketing campaign. As an incentive to hurry and register, the Government said the lists would be closed soon but did not say when. Other sweeteners, apart from the £69m dividend, include a discount for private investors. They are thought likely to pay about 5 per cent less than City institutions.

In addition, there will be a 15p a share discount - up to a maximum of £120 - on the second instalment payment on the shares, which is due in June 1997. Instead of the second discount, buyers will be able to choose one free share for every 15 they hold up to a maximum of 1,200 shares.

The preliminary or "pathfinder" prospectus for the sale,

published yesterday, makes clear there is unlikely to be the huge property development bonanza once claimed by the Labour Party, which has promised to change the rules to clawback some of the money.

The prospectus says Railtrack's property income for the six years to 31 March 2001 is expected to be £1,000m, of which about £250m is from sales of property. The rest is from rent.

Under an agreement with John Swift, the rail regulator, Railtrack keeps 75 per cent of any excess profits it makes on property, with the rest going to the train operating companies.

However, the prospectus makes clear that the £1bn property proceeds have already been accounted for in setting the lev-

el of track access charges paid by train operators. The sharing 75 per cent mechanism only comes into operation if there are additional profits such as a windfall from developing sites owned by Railtrack.

The bulk of Railtrack's property is an intrinsic part of the railway operations and - according to estimates by Hillier, Parker May & Rowden, the chartered surveyors - other property owned by the company has a total value of £230m. This ranges from a stake in the Broadgate office development in the City of London to the Central Hotel in Glasgow.

Clare Short, Labour's transport spokeswoman, said: "A worry to investors will be the value put on Railtrack's property

portfolio. £230m will not provide the bumper development potential many had hoped for. Labour will channel all proceeds from property development back into infrastructure."

However, the absence of large property gains takes the sting out of Labour's threat to change the sharing arrangement for property profits. City analysts said it meant Labour's promised changes would have less of an effect on the value of the company to shareholders.

Labour has also promised much tougher regulation of Railtrack, but the City does not appear to have been deterred because the threat was accompanied by a promise not to cancel existing contracts against the wishes of the parties to them.

Major: monarchy is rock-solid

STEPHEN GOODWIN

John Major yesterday declared Britain's constitutional monarchy to be "rock solid", predicting that any changes in its style and duties would be "gentle".

But as the Prime Minister restated his own royalist beliefs, poll figures confirmed a growing public disenchantment with the monarchy and a preference for the Princess Royal to succeed the Queen, not Prince Charles.

Twenty-three per cent of people questioned for a Mori poll said Britain would be better off without a queen or king, compared with only five per cent who thought so 12 years ago.

Though Mr Major, in a pre-recorded interview on BBC television's *One O'Clock News* to mark the Queen's 70th birthday on 21 April, was eloquent in his praise for the Queen and her understanding of politics, he made no direct reference to any of her family.

Asked in general terms about recent troubles, he said: "Well obviously that turbulence has been very unwelcome...but the constitutional monarchy itself, in my judgement, is rock solid. I can't conceive of this country having anything other than a constitutional monarchy."

"The monarchy is a very powerful institution indeed, and I think this Queen is a very

fine exponent of a constitutional monarchy, so I think that the monarchy will emerge from its present troubles."

"I see no reason for revolutionary changes...these things evolve. That there will be changes, I think is certain, but they will be gentle and they will be consistent with the rhythm and tenor of the age."

The Prime Minister was confident that people would instinctively and intellectually decide Britain would not be better off without a monarchy.

The Mori poll, commissioned for last night's *World in Action* on ITV, showed a continued majority for the monarchy, but the 2,000 voters questioned had a

worrying message for the Royal Family.

Asked who should succeed the Queen, the Princess Royal came top with 33 per cent, leaving Charles on 26 per cent. Only 47 per cent thought the Prince of Wales could be a good monarch, compared to 82 per cent five years ago.

Sixty-one per cent wanted a referendum on the monarchy's future, though 62 per cent said they would still vote for its retention.

Support for the monarchy was particularly fragile in Scotland and Wales, where 71 per cent and 70 per cent respectively said they wanted a referendum at some point.

Branson plans airport rail link

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Railtrack yesterday confirmed that it has had talks with Richard Branson's Virgin group over plans for a rail service linking the City of London directly with Heathrow Airport.

A £200,000 study by consultants Steer, Davies, Gleave, commissioned by Virgin, suggests that the link, using mostly existing track, could be built for as little as £50m and would provide a 34-minute service between Moorgate in the City and the airport once the Heathrow Express to and from Paddington is completed in 1998. Virgin City Link would use existing lines from Moorgate to King's Cross Thameslink and then the North London line, before linking up with the £300m

Heathrow Express route.

Virgin hopes its line can be completed to open at the same time as - or shortly after - the Heathrow Express. Mr Branson met the Secretary of State for Transport, Sir George Young, last month to outline his plans for what would be the first rail service under the "open access" rules created by the rail privatisation act.

Virgin is also in talks with the officials of the offices of both the Rail Regulator and the Franchising Director. A spokesman for Virgin said: "We are about halfway through the assessment of whether the project is viable. Everyone is very supportive but no one thought of the plan before. About half the cost of the line would go on infrastructure and then new trains would have to be leased."

A farmer who falsely claimed that four cows he sold at auction had come from a BSE-free farm was yesterday fined £10,000.

Joseph Roper signed a Ministry of Agriculture declaration which stated the Friesian cows had come from a farm which had not experienced BSE within six years of their sale last year. But yesterday magistrates in Worcester heard that Roper, 42, who owns 200-acre Lower House Farm in Suckley, Hereford and Worcester, had reported a case of BSE in June 1993. The court was told that trading standards officers from Hereford and Worcester County Council were alerted after a vet at Worcester Livestock Market received results of a routine computer check to verify the farmer's claims.

Farmer fined £10,000 over false BSE claim

Mohammed Irshad, prosecuting, said that signing the declaration affected the sale value of cattle.

He said the four charges had resulted from documents signed by Roper at three different sales last year.

"This affects the export value of cows and their value at auction. It wasn't a requirement that everyone had to sign the declaration but if they did it showed BSE had not occurred and that affected the value of the cattle."

Mr Irshad said that Mr Roper had been informed in October 1993 that one of his cows had suffered from BSE before being slaughtered.

This finding, he added, meant the farmer could not sell cattle under the declaration until 1999, Roper's case pre-dat-

ed the recent BSE scare. He was fined £2,500 for each of the four charges, to which he had pleaded guilty. He was also told to pay £500 towards prosecution costs. Four other similar charges were withdrawn.

Sentencing Roper, chairman of the magistrates, Brian Smith, said: "The bench feels very seriously about making false statements, in particular with something likely to enter the food chain."

For the defence, Chris Read had told the court that the offences had been due to a clerical error. He added that Roper was unaware that the cow which had died in 1993 had officially been diagnosed as having BSE.

Mr Read said: "We are talking about a very busy farmer working long hours who simply mislaid his paperwork."

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news

Refugee, 85, sent for Britain's first war crimes trial

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Britain's first war crimes case is to go ahead after an 85-year-old refugee was committed for trial yesterday accused of murdering three Jews in the Second World War.

Szymon Serafinowicz is charged under the 1991 War Crimes Act with the murder of three unnamed Jews in Byelorussia, now Belarus, during Nazi occupation of the former Soviet republic.

After a two-month committal hearing, Dorset magistrates ruled there was sufficient evidence to commit Mr Serafinowicz for trial at the Old Bailey. The court had heard testimony from 16 witnesses, some of whom flew in from the United States, South Africa, Siberia and Israel. Details of the

proceedings cannot be reported for legal reasons.

At yesterday's hearing one of the original charges was dropped and Peter Badge, the chief metropolitan magistrate, said there was a case to answer on a new charge, that Mr Serafinowicz had murdered an unnamed Jew at Dolmatowicz, in Byelorussia.

Mr Serafinowicz, a retired carpenter, looked blank as the charges were read out and appeared not to register the presence of his sons Kazimierz, 49, and Szymon, 52, in court.

He settled in Britain after the war with his Polish-born wife, who died some years ago. In July 1995 he was arrested at his home in Banstead, Surrey, and charged, after a two-year inquiry by Scotland Yard's war crimes unit. The 1991 Act meant the

Crown Prosecution Service could bring charges even though the alleged offences happened abroad.

Nicholas Bowers, for the defence, said his client was "delighted" one of the charges had been dropped. "He is looking forward to establishing his innocence before a jury," he said.

The first charge against Mr Serafinowicz alleges he murdered an unnamed Jew in Mir, Byelorussia, in November 1941; the second that he murdered an unnamed Jew at Krymichne, Byelorussia, between December 1941 and March 1942; and the third that he murdered an unnamed Jew at Dolmatowicz between November 1941 and March 1942.

Mr Serafinowicz was bailed to appear at the Old Bailey next month for a pre-trial hearing.



On trial: Szymon Serafinowicz being driven away after the committal decision

PC is jailed for karate attack

A police constable's career was left in ruins yesterday when he was jailed for three months for launching a "totally unprovoked" karate attack on a teenager who was being held in custody.

PC Colin Leask, 29, of the Grampian force, appeared for sentencing at Aberdeen Sheriff Court after earlier being found guilty of assaulting 19-year-old Kevin McGeachy, who was being held in a cell at police headquarters in Aberdeen last July.

Leask, a martial arts expert since the age of 12, had denied the assault charge. He was released on bail pending appeal.

The court had been told at the earlier hearing how 18-stone Leask kicked Mr McGeachy between the legs before unleashing a flurry of blows to his head and throwing him to the ground where he split his head.

Mr McGeachy had been under the influence of drink and drugs at the time and had been taken into custody for a strip

search following a disturbance in Aberdeen city centre, the trial was told.

Other officers in the cell said Leask's attack was totally unprovoked.

Leask claimed he only used a martial arts self-defence technique when he thought Mr McGeachy was about to kick and hit him.

Mr Shepherd told the court his client's eight-year career in the police force was "now in ruins".

Jailing Leask, Sheriff Graeme Warner said society would "return to the old days of South Africa if policemen were allowed to beat up people they didn't care for very much".

He would be failing in his duty if he did not send Leask to prison. It was totally unacceptable for police officers to assault people in custody.

During the trial, the court was told that Leask was a black belt in karate and expert in various forms of martial arts. He had competed in martial arts tournaments at home and abroad.

Potter's daughter tells of 'unreal' last days

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The daughter of the writer Dennis Potter yesterday described watching her father slave to complete his final two dramas — knowing he had only weeks before he died of cancer.

Sarah Potter was speaking at the launch of the television series of *Karneke* and *Cold Lazarus*, which will be shown on both Channel 4 and BBC1 in response to Potter's dying wish. *Karneke* starts on BBC1 on 28 April and *Cold Lazarus* runs on Channel 4 from 26 May.

Karneke is the story of Daniel Feild, a writer given months to live, who believes the characters in his latest film are coming alive around him. Before he dies Feild — played by Albert Finney — freezes his head. *Cold Lazarus*, set in 2368, details attempts to reactivate it.

Potter's own last months were particularly painful because his wife, Margaret, was also diagnosed as having terminal cancer. Potter survived



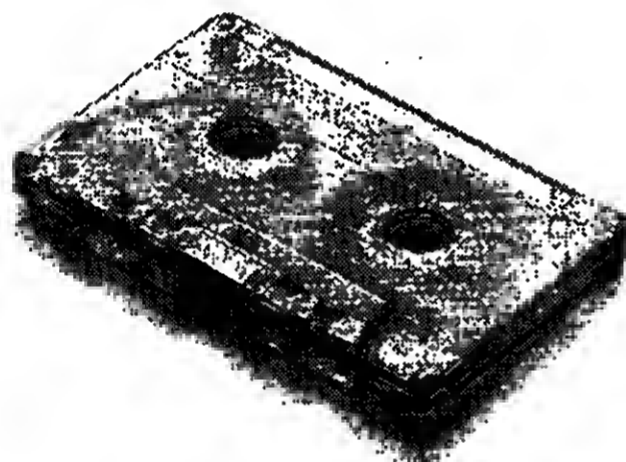
Albert Finney: Starring role

her by a week before he died in June 1994.

His daughter said: "Those days were almost unreal. Watching Dad, we knew it was harder for him to bear mother's demise than his own."

Finney said: "We all wonder how we would handle such a situation if we were told we only had weeks to live. I'd probably lock myself in Odibus [the wine merchants] or fly off to some exotic spot."

How to take a pill.



When a blind person is given medication, they can ask their doctor or pharmacist to dictate any instructions onto a cassette tape. The tape will explain the correct dosage, the shape and size of each pill or bottle and when the medication needs to be taken.

It's a simple solution to an everyday problem. But in most cases blind people are not given the basic information they require in an accessible form. The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) is campaigning for companies to make information available in formats such as tape, braille, large print and computer disk to meet the needs of their blind customers. Contrary to popular belief, many blind people possess enough sight to read print if it is large and clear enough. RNIB offers advice on the production of legible information so that blind people don't have to go through the daily frustration of relying on others to read out their letters.

For many blind people the phone is a very immediate form of communication. RNIB is pushing for it to be used more widely for recording information and as a talking bill service — a plan already adopted by many utility companies. RNIB also provides many thousands of documents in braille for both individuals and companies. Most of these improvements are relatively inexpensive and are essential if blind people are to lead independent lives. Maybe you know someone with poor or failing sight who may benefit from the services we offer. If you would like more information about RNIB please call us on 0345 023040.



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Royal National Institute for the Blind
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£5,000-9,999	3.50	2.80
£500-4,999	3.15	2.52
£1-499	0.50	0.40
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£50,000+	4.00	3.20
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£10,000-24,999	3.25	2.60
£5,000-9,999	2.50	2.00
£500-4,999	2.15	1.72
£1-499	0.50	0.40
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£50,000+	4.00	3.20
£25,000-49,999	3.75	3.00
£10,000-24,999	3.25	2.60
£5,000-9,999	2.75	2.20
£2,000-4,999	2.65	2.12
£1,000-1,999	2.55	2.04
£500-999	2.45	1.96
£1-499	0.50	0.40
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£10,000+	1.75	1.40
£5,000-9,999	0.50	0.40
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	6.75	N/A

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Cuts hit status of UK universities abroad

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

British universities, long regarded as the best in the world, are in danger of losing their international status in research, according to a report from four leading academies published yesterday.

Research money will have to be concentrated in a few elite universities if British research is to keep its credibility abroad, claims the controversial report from the British Academy, the Conference of Medical Royal Colleges, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society.

They acknowledge that this will be unpopular but argue that it is inescapable given funding restrictions imposed by the Government.

Britain's research capability, they conclude, is already crumbling. In 1993 we spent just 2.1

per cent of GDP on research and development compared with 2.8 per cent in Japan and 2.7 per cent in the United States. Germany and France also spent a higher percentage of GDP than Britain.

"We hold bottom position, suggesting that the UK research base is underfunded when viewed on the international stage," says the report.

Meanwhile, increasing staff-student ratios are cutting the time academics have for research. Funding per student fell by about 20 per cent in the five years up to 1993-4.

The environment for high quality research is also in decline as libraries, equipment and buildings deteriorate. The report comments: "Our best researchers should not feel that the only way they can find an environment in which they can do top class work is to go abroad permanently."

It argues that government money for higher education should be distributed selectively. "We believe that it is in the national interest that research should be supported adequately even if this means reducing the volume."

Dr David Harrison, Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, who chaired the working group, said universities should concentrate on what they did best and be funded accordingly. "Teaching should have a higher status and not be regarded as a poor relation of research. We want universities to maximise funding from as many sources as possible and we take no comfort from the latest projections of government research spending."

The report says it has become increasingly difficult for new fields of research to establish themselves. The concentration of funds has already begun

with 54 per of all research income going to 15 universities.

A spokesman for the Association of University Teachers said he agreed with the report's conclusion about funding difficulties but strongly opposed the idea of more selectivity which would deprive many talented researchers of funding.

"We should like to see the available money spread more thinly. More concentration would effect our ability to recruit the best brains in the university system. If they can't get a place here, they will go to California or Boston."

But the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals welcomed the report. A spokesman said: "There are so many good ideas and so little money that we have to make sure the money is not being spent on second-rate ideas. It may be regrettable but is inevitable in the present funding situation."



Light-footed: Benazir Hussain and Jonathan Cope during rehearsals for *Illuminations*, part of the Frederick Ashton triple bill performed by the Royal Ballet, which opened at Covent Garden last night. Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Jail staff 'left suicide-risk inmate alone'

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

A suicidal woman suffocated herself soon after admission to Holloway jail in north London, after a prison officer dismissed police warnings and staff left her alone for 90 minutes.

Claire Bosley, 34, killed herself by stuffing toilet tissue down her throat and blocking her airways – a successful repeat of one of three earlier attempts she had made on her life in the previous 72 hours in police custody.

But despite both a telephoned and written warning from police that Mrs Bosley posed an "exceptional risk" of suicide, the senior reception officer at Holloway reached a different conclusion. Yesterday Pauline Martindale, told a London inquest into Mrs Bosley's death: "My assessment was that although she was distressed she did not pose a major suicide risk. She did not give the impression she was in crisis."

Mrs Bosley – who apparently unknown to prison staff had been diagnosed as suffering paranoid depression – was placed alone in a holding room in the prison reception area. She went in to an adjacent lavatory and thrust five sheets of toilet tissue down the back of her throat. Professor David Bowen, the pathologist, said she would have had to have been determined in order to overcome a natural impulse to gag.

Her absence went unnoticed for 90 minutes as prison staff checked in and processed three other prisoners admitted to the jail after her.

Mrs Bosley had been arrested and charged last November after confessing to stabbing her husband, Barry, to death.

A police psychiatrist, who had been called to see if Mrs Bosley was fit to be questioned, had decided she had been depressed

since May, when she suffered her second ectopic pregnancy, leaving her unable to have any more children. He believed she had developed a morbid jealousy of her husband and decided that because of the nature of her offence – and her mental state – the best place for her to be was in a prison hospital.

She was remanded to Holloway on 25 November, last year. Her death, the second in the country's largest women's jail last year, occurred just one week before the Chief Inspector of Prisons walked out of the troubled prison in protest at the conditions.

Yesterday an inquest jury at the City of London coroner's court was told that since Mrs Bosley's death – the first to occur in the jail's reception area – those prisoners arriving with the red-ringed "Pol 1" written warnings from police are now held near an office where they can be supervised.

But Michael Ainsworth, Holloway's deputy governor, admitted that although staff were trained in suicide awareness there were neither national nor local written protocols on what should be done, when "risk" prisoners arrive.

Pauline Martindale, who said she had worked at Holloway for 12 years, estimated that about 30 per cent of all women sent to Holloway arrive with a risk warning. On the Saturday of Mrs Bosley's reception there were only five staff on duty and three of those were dealing with two disruptive inmates.

Earlier, David Rummens, Mrs Bosley's brother had told the inquest how his sister, a secretary, had driven with her son to her parents' house and told them she had killed her husband in the bedroom of their home in Basingstoke, Hampshire.

The hearing continues today.

The NatWest 90's Prize for Art.

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This year's overall winner, Sora Raphael, receives a cheque for £20,000 in recognition of her interpretations of the Australian Outback. However, every winner receives something almost as precious: the chance to hang their work in one of the art world's most distinguished galleries.

The work of this year's five winning artists will be on view at the Royal Academy from the 16th to the 19th of April.

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DAILY POEM

Four Haiku Poets

translated by James Kirkup

Fresh grass in springtime:
on each cross, a soldier's name
and his country's name

Yamazaki Hisao

A beautiful boy –
easy come, but easy go –
thin ice in springtime

Nagata Koi

Have the forsythias
at Yotsuyamitsuke
begun blooming yet?

Kinichi Sawaki

Leaving the castle,
one cherry blossom petal
sail drifting on air

Yamaguchi Seishi

They are by no means the whole of Japanese poetry, but haiku are the best known expression of it in the West, writes James Kirkup. Unfortunately English readers have been misled by bad translations that do not respect either the meaning or the form of haiku. For complete aesthetic satisfaction, the haiku even in translation should also be based on the 5-7-5 syllable pattern. As Auden once said to me: "Where's the fun of haiku if you don't obey the rules?" Alas, too many Western poets today have abandoned them. Haiku subjects can be grim, sordid, ugly, shocking: but the form transcends the theme. War, sickness, madness, death, natural disaster all find their place in this poetic art. The oldest haiku poet living in Japan is Nagata Koi, now 96 years of age, who survived the Kobe earthquake.

James Kirkup is President of the British Haiku Society. His *A Certain State of Mind: An Anthology of Classic, Modern and Contemporary Japanese Haiku* is published by the University of Salzburg Press.

jailed for
the attack

daughter tells
real last days

Current
Savings Rates

TSB

Judges told to dispel 'aloof' image

Judges were told yesterday to shed their crusty image and start speaking out publicly to show they were in touch with ordinary people.

The Lord Chief Justice said it was up to the judiciary to prove they did not "live on another planet" and be prepared to air their views.

Lord Taylor warned that criticism of the court system was reaching new heights after decades of apparently aloof behaviour by the judiciary.

He told a conference at St Al-

bans, Hertfordshire, that the media was scrutinising court cases as never before - often pushing reporting rules to the limit. "TV, radio and newspaper critics do not shrink from substituting their assessments for those made by the court. They lambast the judiciary for failing to satisfy what they conceive to be - and indeed aim to shape as - the public's demands," he said.

"A legacy from past reticence is that judges have acquired and still retain a reputation for being aloof and

for holding themselves apart. The media often couple this perception with allegations, not borne out by the facts, that judges are out of touch.

"No doubt at one time it was acceptable for judges to restrict their pronouncements to giving judgment or passing sentences, but the shift in public attitudes under the growing influence of the media calls for a different approach.

"It is simply no longer sensible to remain silent when so much attention, much of it high-

ly critical, is focused on courts and the judicial process. In the absence of any reply it would be assumed against the judges that they were so arrogant and complacent as to believe they could ignore criticism or that they had no good answer to it."

Lord Taylor said judges should on occasion be prepared to speak out and be ready to answer criticisms and explain policies. "If judges do speak out on topics which concern the public they may overcome the widely held belief,

stemming from all those years of lofty reticence, that they are out of touch or even, as has been said, living on another planet.

"It should not be done too often, but it can and does have a role to play in the evolution and development of a sound legal system in which the public can have confidence."

Judges have theoretically been free to speak out on matters of public interest since the Lord Chancellor scrapped "vow of silence" rules in 1987.

With few exceptions they

have chosen to stick to their traditional role of restricting their remarks to judgments made in court and relying on the media to give a balanced view of the case and the reasons behind sentences. Lord Taylor said curbs on the media could be necessary to "deter gross excesses" and courts could play a part in heading off inaccurate or misleading reporting.

Judges were now prepared to issue written summaries of their findings aimed at explaining judge-

ments to the public through the media. But he again rejected pressure for television cameras to be allowed in courts as stressful to witnesses, potentially damaging to justice and likely to generate the kind of media circus that marked the OJ Simpson trial in the United States.

Lord Taylor, who took up the post four years ago, has led the way in making his views public and is taking a prominent role in opposing tougher mandatory sentencing proposed by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

'Red hot' video led to sack from fire service

A firefighter was sacked after making a "hard-core" pornographic video with his girlfriend which joked about the fire service, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

Sub Officer Mark Gregory, 26, is heard in the film telling the woman to say "what do you think of the firemen now?" and "this one's for Red Watch".

Mr Gregory, of Nuthall, Nottinghamshire, was sacked for gross misconduct from Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service last August after copies of the video were circulated and shown in at least five fire stations across the county.

The Nottingham tribunal heard Mr Gregory made the film in a hotel in West Bridgford, Nottingham, with his girlfriend in March last year.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Trevor Newton, who investigated the case and watched the video, told the tribunal that Red Watch had later been shown the film. He said: "This was clearly a reference to the fire service."

"I saw a considerable part of the video. It was very pornographic in nature and quite clearly featured Sub Officer Gregory. I recognised him straight away. He appeared in the video with a girl called Janine. He was quite clearly directing this young lady as to what to do and where to go. It was not a soft glamour type video, it was hard-core pornography by any definition, confirmed by the police vice squad."

The references to the fire services "clearly suggested it was for more than private use".

Mr Newton said one officer had told him Mr Gregory had said he intended to "make a lot of money out of it".

He also claimed that Mr Gregory had distributed copies of the video to two colleagues - committing a criminal offence, although he had not been charged with a criminal offence - and had spoken openly about the film in particular to a number of women working in the fire service.

Mr Gregory admitted the film was pornographic but is claiming he was unfairly dismissed. He claims the fire brigade breached its regulations in dismissing him, its investigation of the facts was insufficient and he was never given written reasons for the dismissal. The former officer, who served with the brigade for eight years, said the video was intended to be private. He said: "I made the film off duty, in my own time and I was not in uniform."

He said that he only made copies after two friends asked for these and he intended the soundtrack to be erased and replaced with music.

The hearing continues today.

Better English for the young

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Foreigners take more pride in improving their spoken English than English people do, Trevor McDonald, ITN newscaster and chairman of the Better English Campaign, said yesterday.

Announcing plans to help young people speak and write better English, he said: "We are cursed by the tendency to take English too much for granted. To me it is extraordinary that we should neglect English when many people round the world are rushing to learn it. Other countries were more conscious of the power of language."

The campaign, which costs the Government £250,000 a year, plus the salaries of two civil servants, was launched by Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, at last year's Conservative party conference. Campaigners are sending out leaflets urging people to host Scrabble contests or set up word challenges as part of their local pub quiz to improve the nation's English.

Employers will be sent leaflets urging them to sponsor public speaking competitions, or campaign weeks on local radio. They will also be asked to explain to unsuccessful job applicants if their rejection was due to poor English. Firms which want to become Better English employers must agree to promote the campaign's aims in staff recruitment and training and to offer interview practices in local schools and colleges.

Mr McDonald was surprised to discover that many people were arriving at university ill-equipped to express themselves in both spoken and written English. However, he emphasised that he was not asking schools to shoulder the blame for the lack of basic communication skills among school leavers.

"There are people who do very well at school who still lack the skill to present themselves in a job interview," he said.

Culloden marks another milestone in myth

James Cusick
reports on the war
of words 250
years after the
bloodiest battle

The last sanctioned attempt at "ethnic cleansing" on British soil will be remembered today.

The 250th anniversary of the battle of Culloden, where Charles Edward Stuart's Jacobite army were slaughtered by government forces under the command of George II's younger son, has prompted a re-evaluation of the battle's importance. The Scots invoked by the English? A tragic civil war?

In a new exhibition at the National Trust's visitor centre at Culloden, near Inverness, the Dukes of Argyll and Atholl, whose ancestors fought on opposing sides, have offered evaluations of the battle. Their views indicate the debate may have another 250 years to run.

Culloden, or more accurately Drumossie Moor, was the end of the 1745 Rising. Bonnie Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender, had landed at Moidart on Scotland's west coast in July 1745. His aim was to reclaim the British Crown for his father.

If the background was that simple, there would be far less poetry and myth written about Culloden. "Something was cut down here, which never grew again," wrote Neil Ascherson in the *Independent* on Sunday. Like the revisionist Jacobite music which is still played, and wept to, in Scottish folk clubs throughout the tartan diaspora, Culloden is the last time Scotland tried, and heroically failed, to regain nationhood. But separating myth and martyrdom from reality is not easy.

The historian Professor Christopher Smout, now retired from St Andrews University, believes Culloden should stand for the tragedies of all civil wars and the 250th anniversary could have been used to build an international monument to those, like the people of Yugoslavia or Rwanda, who have suffered in such conflict.

The 1707 Union of Scotland and England, the death of the last of the Stuarts, Anne, in 1714, and the Hanoverian accession, are all part of the Cul-



Fighting talk: Mark MacKenzie, left, and Graeme De Sainte Croix enact a clash between the Duke of Cumberland and Prince Charlie on the 250th anniversary of Culloden; and right, clansmen remember the fallen with flowers Photograph: Peter Jolly

loden legend. With the Stuarts exiled, Scotland was divided between Roman Catholic and Episcopal and the "established" Presbyterian church, divided between the Highlands and the mercantile classes of Glasgow and Edinburgh. And crucially, even divided by clan into pro-government and pro-Jacobite.

Charles Stuart, if history is trying to be kind, found himself in the right place at the right time. Scotland was caught neatly in the middle of Europe's turning power struggle. He believed that if won brave hearts in Scotland the French would assist him in England. Just over 6,000 Scots formed the Jacobite army that went as far as Derby. Culloden was the bloody end as the Bonnie Prince retreated

north. If he had gone on would the French have helped him take London? That is another myth in the tragedy of Culloden.

However, Professor Smout believes "Culloden means a little bit more than the last fling of Gaeldom. There were Gaels in both armies. And throughout Scotland there were many who were cynical of the high politics of the time."

The slaughter at the end of the 40 minute battle is another unsubstantiated aspect of the conflict. But Professor Smout believes Cumberland's hatred of the Scots meant "more than just a nod and wink to his officers" to carry out the slaughter of around 1,500 out of 4,500 who faced Cumberland's 9,000 troops and heavy artillery.

The Duke of Atholl believes the new Culloden exhibition is remembering a civil war. The 1707 Union, he says, "ranked with many Scots, who felt they had lost control of their own affairs", and the Jacobite risings tried to effect a cure for the loss.

While going along with the notion of civil war, the Duke of Argyll, the head of the Clan Campbell, disagrees on everything else. "The vast majority of the Clan Campbell fought staunchly for the Hanoverian Succession and the Protestant faith... I am profoundly thankful that he [the Bonnie Prince] never got to the British throne."

As they omit to say in the history books, this one is set to run and run.

Andrew Marr, page 15



Cottage holidays with THE INDEPENDENT

SPRING BREAKS FOR £5 PER PERSON PER NIGHT

Escape to the countryside for a Spring break with The Independent and the Independent on Sunday Cottage Holiday offer. We've teamed up with Blakes Country Cottages to offer readers the opportunity to sample Blakes great family holidays in a selection of hand-picked properties for just £5 per person per night.

Blakes Country Cottages are one of the largest and most experienced cottage holiday companies in Britain, with a range of almost 2000 properties to choose from in the most popular parts of Britain.

This exclusive offer applies to 200 properties in 18 selected holiday sites, with accommodation ranging from a converted stable block, to the wing of a country house, to cosy woodland lodges. There is always plenty to enjoy, from peaceful walks in the country to riding and games rooms for the children. Simply ask for details when you call Blakes to book.

The offer allows you to stay for £5 per person per night and you must stay for a minimum of seven nights. Holidays can be taken between 20 April - 24 May 1996. Accommodation is suitable for parties of two to twelve. Accommodation must be booked at maximum occupancy, for example a party of four cannot occupy accommodation which sleeps seven.

HOW TO QUALIFY

Simply collect four differently numbered tokens from the seven we will be printing until Saturday 20 April. Today we are printing Token 3.

HOW TO BOOK

• Call Blakes Country Cottages on 01282 445221 for a brochure and reservations, quoting the "Independent £5 per night offer".

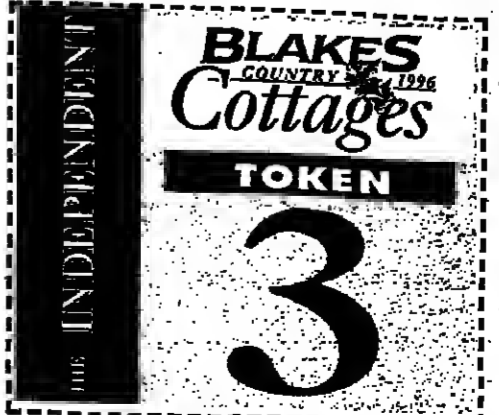
• Give your advisor the following details:
(a) Your preferred holiday area: North England, West Country, Scotland or Wales.
(b) The number of adults and children on holiday.
(c) The holiday start and end dates.



Pictured is Wauinfor House, Telf Valley, Wales. Wauinfor is a small country estate of 5 acres situated in the unspoilt countryside in the lovely Telf Valley. Wauinfor consists of a country house, coach house and cottages built of Welsh stone during the 18th and 19th centuries, recently converted to provide comfortable accommodation. The market towns of Camarthen and Lampeter are close by, as well as the Cardigan Bay coast which is dotted with pretty fishing villages.

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- 4 Holiday must start and finish between 20 April and 24 May 1996.
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• Please note, you may book immediately before you have collected your four tokens, but you will require the tokens for final confirmation of your booking.

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South Bank

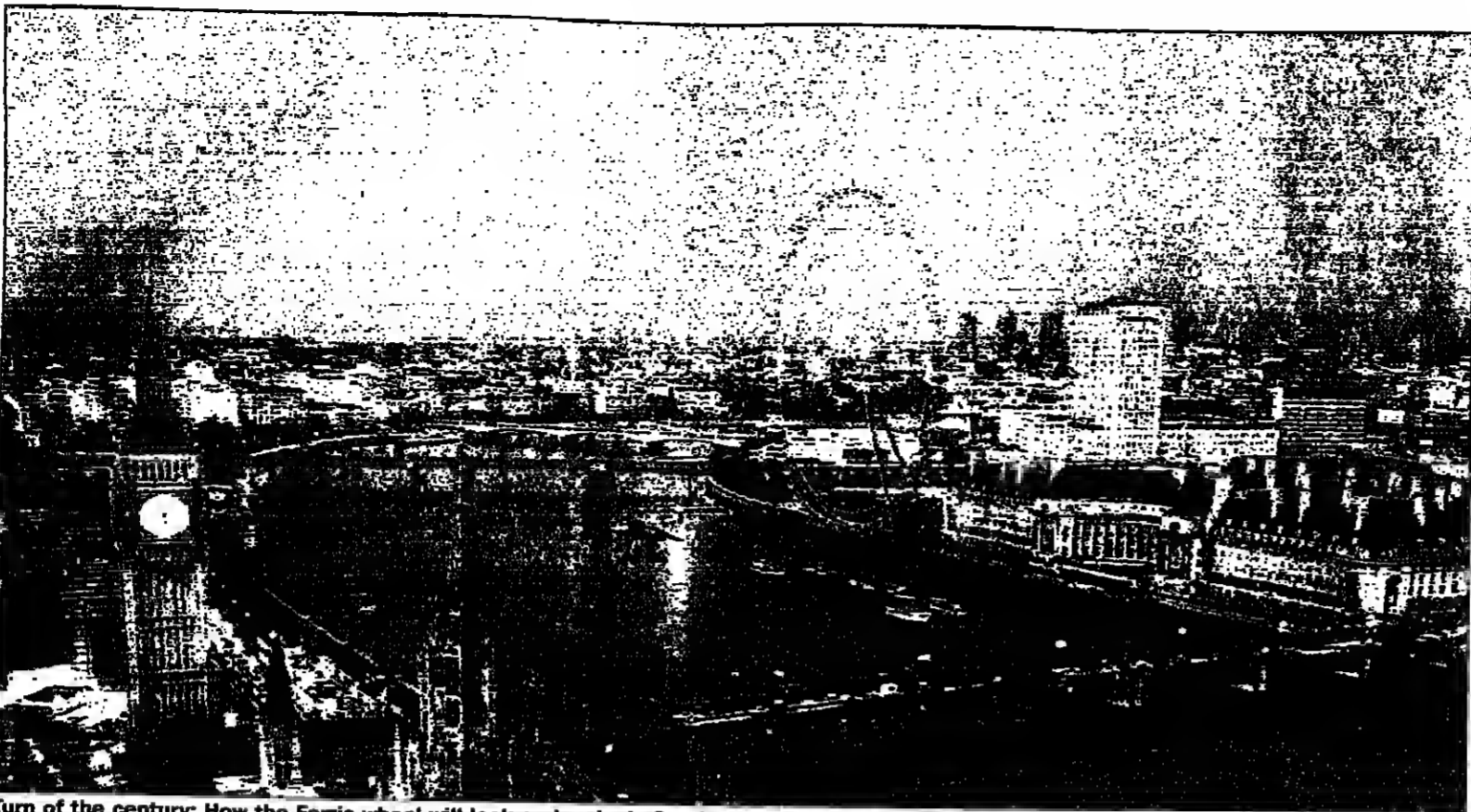
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South Bank regeneration: Lottery grant for £40m National Theatre repairs as private sector backs 500-ft millennium skyride



Turn of the century: How the Ferris wheel will look on London's South Bank. The project will cost £10m and will be completed by 1998

Airline funds world's biggest Ferris wheel

MICHAEL STREETER

Plans to build the world's largest Ferris wheel on a site overlooking the River Thames and the Palace of Westminster will in effect be given the go-ahead tomorrow with the announcement of funding by British Airways.

The 500ft-high Millennium Ferris is expected to cost £9.5m and should be revolving by 1998 in Jubilee Gardens, next to the old County Hall.

The wheel is the latest move in the regeneration of the South Bank, coinciding with the National Theatre winning £31m in lottery money this week from the Arts Council for renovation.

Ironically, the Ferris project will not receive any lottery funding. Instead MPs will be soon able to gaze at a triumph for private finance as British Airways is expected to an-

nounce tomorrow that it will provide the bulk of the funding.

An estimated two million visitors a year will be treated to panoramic views of London as they travel at a gentle 1.5ft per second. A round trip will take about 20 minutes and will cost between £3 and £5.

More than half the energy needed to propel the wheel will be provided by the river Thames's tidal power, while the 60 all-weather cars will be lit and heated by solar panels.

The scheme is the idea of the London-based architects David Marks and Julia Barfield, regarded as among the most innovative of their generation. Mr Marks has said: "We wanted to come up with something that wasn't just another dumb monument."

But yesterday he was reluctant to talk before this week's announcement. Final approval is expected in

June from Lambeth council, in whose area the development will take place. The creators plan to keep the wheel there for five years and then move to a permanent site.

However, the giant wheel is not without critics. Lord St John of Fawsley, the former Cabinet minister and now chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, has attacked it as "wholly unsuitable for this part of London".

Meanwhile the Arts Council is due to announce a £31m lottery grant to the National Theatre. Theatre officials have been reassured it will get the money for £42m repairs to the front of house, backstage and roof. This will be dwarfed, however, if the South Bank succeeds in an application for £127m to spruce up the Royal Festival Hall, reigniting the controversy over "elitist" lottery grants.

Schools to face teacher shortage

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Schools will face massive teacher shortages before the end of the decade, it was revealed last night. The profession needs an injection of new blood to meet a rise in pupil numbers but the number of applicants is falling dramatically.

An extra £1.6m is to be put into recruitment campaigns in the next year, but the initiative is unlikely to prevent a major shortfall. Ministers have promised to increase the number of teacher trainees from 20,000 to 30,000 per year in the next four years. However, the number applying to become secondary teachers has dropped by 12 per cent since this time last year and it seems that the profession is waning in popularity.

Last night experts in the field said young people were being put off applying by their own teachers, who were telling them to avoid teaching at all costs. The problems of poor wages and low morale which have dogged the profession for years were now being compounded by a spate of redundancies and early retirements, they said. Many schools have got rid of older, more expensive staff because of cuts. In the past new entrants had often cited job security as an advantage of going into teaching, but now they were unsure even about this.

Another possible explanation is that Britain is coming out of recession and graduates had more chance of finding a job in another, more lucrative field. At the beginning of this month, just 15,000 people had applied for places on post-graduate courses for secondary school teachers, compared with 17,000 at the same time last year. In shortage subjects such as maths and sciences, the situation was much worse. In physics the number had dropped by 37 per cent from 470 to 300 and in maths it had dropped by 28 per cent to 1,060.

Some areas were more healthy, with applicants for

physical education teaching rising by 13 per cent to almost 1,000, and the total applications for primary school teaching up 3 per cent to 12,300.

Anthea Millett, chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency, which oversees recruitment initiatives, said there might be a late surge in applications during the summer term, but admitted that the real problems would come at the end of the decade.

"We recognise that we will have a shortfall in subjects which are difficult to recruit to, but the real issue is what new strategies we put in place to secure a better situation at the time when we will have difficulties," she said.

However, teacher trainers said last night that the profession's image had hit rock bottom and the Government was doing little to put the situation right. Ted Wragge, professor of education at the University of Exeter, said he had been predicting a crisis in teacher recruitment for three years but ministers had taken little notice.

Almost all the students who came for interview at Exeter had been put off teaching by its poor image and many had heeded advice by experienced teachers to do something else instead, he said. One young woman had met her old head teacher in the street and had told her of her intention to become a teacher. The head had replied that she must be mad and that if she had her time again she would not go into teaching.

"In the past people thought teaching might pay lower salaries, but at least it was a secure and fulfilling job. Now people feel it is still badly paid and a number of teachers have been fired," he said.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said figures illustrated the Government's failure to plan for the needs of schools. "It is vital that we do all we can to attract good graduates into the profession so that these shortages can be tackled before they hit hard," he said.

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international

Trojan gold fuels rift over war treasures

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

To the considerable irritation of Germany, the Russians will today unveil one of the most breathtaking archaeological finds in history – a collection of gold from ancient Troy, which the Red Army seized in Berlin at the end of the Second World War.

More than 250 pieces unearthed by a German amateur archaeologist will go on display in Moscow for the first time, despite repeated German claims that the treasures belong to them and ought to be given back.

The Trojan gold, a tiny fraction of the many thousands of works of art which the Soviet Union seized at the end of the war, have become the focal point in a row over wartime booty that has marred Germany's otherwise friendly relations with the Kremlin.

The collection's existence in Russia only became known in 1993, when the Pushkin Museum astonished the world by revealing that it was in its possession. It is known as King Priam's treasure because its discoverer in 1873 – Heinrich Schliemann – was convinced it belonged to Priam, the King of Troy who featured in Homer's *Iliad*. Experts have since dated it to long before Homer – some 2500BC.

Yesterday, Germany's ambassador to Moscow, Ernst von Stauditz, was putting on the bravest face that anyone could be expected to wear, given that he was contemplating billions of pounds worth of sparkling treasure – from basket-shaped gold earrings to a solid gold gravy boat – that his country lays claim to.

"I think it is a step towards normalcy that these things are now, after 50 years in hiding, finally surfacing again," he said. "But I would not say this is a matter for rejoicing."

The German embassy was a little more forthright. It issued a statement lamenting that the issue had arisen "when German-Russian relations are especially close and built on trust and when Germany regards itself as the best partner of Russia". Their pique is hardly surprising: only a few weeks ago, Helmut Kohl swept into Moscow in a trip which clearly

boosted Boris Yeltsin's presidential campaign.

The Pushkin exhibition is another chapter in a long feud over art seized by the Red Army. In 1990, amid the euphoria following the end of the Cold War, Russia and Germany signed a "good neighbour" treaty providing for the mutual return of wartime booty. But Russia has remained reluctant, and negotiations have run into trouble.

Russians have tended to argue that their haul of priceless treasures from Germany is rightfully theirs, as restitution for the colossal damages and losses inflicted by the Nazis. The Soviet Union under Stalin – which saw at least 500 museums destroyed by Hitler's army – set about gathering booty methodically. Art experts were dispatched to Germany with specific orders to collect art, and to arrange for its shipment back to the Soviet Union.

The signs are that much of it will stay in Russian hands for a while yet. Asked about the prospects for the return of King Priam's gold to Berlin, Mr von Stauditz replied gloomily: "I am not optimistic."



Priceless: A Russian journalist admires a solid gold sauceboat, part of the Trojan collection, at the Pushkin Museum yesterday. Photograph: Sergei Karpukhin

Governor must go, say defiant islanders

PHIL DAVISON

Local politicians in the Turks and Caicos Islands have accused Britain of threatening the Caribbean islands with military intervention and reiterated their demand that the British Governor, Martin Bourke, be recalled.

At a meeting on the island of Grand Turk, the local government and opposition, united against the Governor, told visiting Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Sir Nicholas Bonsor, they would refuse to work with Mr Bourke.

In a letter handed to Sir Nicholas, Chief Minister Derek Taylor and opposition leaders criticised Britain for reportedly sending a warship off their coast after portraying the islanders as "violent and lawless".

"We ask that all threats of military intervention be called off," the politicians said, adding that Britain should pay compensation for any money lost in tourism or investment as a result of recent negative publicity, which they blame on the Governor.

The crisis broke in February when Mr Bourke, a 49-year-old career diplomat who has been Governor of the British dependent territory since 1993, spoke in an interview of drug-trafficking, police corruption and growing crime. The local

government and opposition, united for the first time, accused him of damaging tourism and investment prospects and demanded he be recalled.

It was Sir Nicholas Bonsor who rejected that demand earlier this month, when a Turks and Caicos Islands delegation visited Whitehall.

Reiterating their demand, the local politicians told Sir Nicholas: "We were left utterly dismayed by Her Majesty's Government's handling of the people's petition and more so by HMG's actions in this matter, including attempts at portraying the leadership and people of the TCI as violent and lawless, resulting in the deployment of a British warship off the TCI."

Sir Nicholas reportedly insisted that the vessel, believed to be the frigate HMS *Brave*, was in the area for reasons unconnected with the crisis over the Governor. He also repeated Britain's position that Mr Bourke would not be recalled.

Governors generally stay a minimum of three years but their assignment is open-ended "at Her Majesty's pleasure". The previous governor was in the TCI for six and a half years. Mr Bourke's three-year minimum, with holiday time, will be up in September and there are rumours in Whitehall that his assignment will end soon after.

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French rust belt provides ready recruits for Islam

Until recently, the city of Roubaix was known across France for one thing: the annual Paris-Roubaix cycle race, which is contested for 50 of its 250 kilometres over the uniquely tiring cobbled surfaces of northern towns and villages.

Last weekend, though, as competitors formed up for this year's race, Roubaix's image for tough but honest sporting endeavour was eclipsed by a quite different and far less inspiring image.

Three weeks before, the city hit the headlines with a chain of events that began with a car bomb outside police headquarters and ended with a chase, shoot-out and hostage-taking in Belgium.

In between, there had been a siege and gunfight in the city's grim backstreets in which four men were killed, two policemen injured and a house gutted. Automatic weapons and grenades, along with fundamentalist Islamic literature, were found in the ruins.

To Roubaix's detractors, who already regarded it as the distillation of almost every French ill – industrial decline, unemployment, immigrant ghettos, the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, drug trafficking, violence – here was proof.

But the first response from the authorities was soothing, along the lines of: "Just a spot of gangsterism: it's all over now."

The second response evoked anxiety verging on panic: links between this violence and Islamic fundamentalist terrorism could not entirely be ruled out, said Jean-Louis Debré, the Interior Minister. After years of neglect, Roubaix had become a national concern.

The usual approach to Roubaix from Paris is by the recently completed tramway from Lille. From there, it is hard to believe everything that is said about the town: there are landscaped parks, broad green verges and large houses, reminiscent of solid Victorian suburbs in Britain.

However, as the tram reaches its terminus, two minutes' walk from Roubaix's central square and town hall, it is evi-

Mary Dejevsky in Roubaix sees the appeal that religion has for a 'betrayed' generation

dent all is far from well. It has the look of every unhappy French city.

There is a profusion of graffiti and litter; listless gatherings of poorly dressed young people, many of them brown, fewer black and white; streets of boarded-up shops; elderly people scuttling along the inside edge of the pavement with modest bags of shopping.

There is abundant evidence of regeneration efforts, most for the short term and done on the cheap: gaudy metal frames and buildings set at jaunty angles, in-

compatible with what survives from the past. What does survive from the past is dirty and neglected. The liveliness and tasteful restraint of "happy" French towns is absent.

In the tiny heart of the city, the broad square and official buildings with their tall, dark and narrow facades, have something of old-style Belgium.

The rest is a mish-mash of grid streets lined with old terraced houses, a couple of newish hotels – with high metal fences around them – and patches of recent, high-density housing in what are only theoretically pedestrianised areas.

In its heyday, Roubaix was known as the "city of a hundred chimneys" and was the hub of the French textile industry. Over the past 30 years, it has almost vanished.

Few jobs have arrived to take the place of the thousands lost. Immigrants who arrived to work in the mills – some directly from France's colonies, others from Belgium – found themselves and their families without work or the prospect of work.

None of this by itself explains why Roubaix should over the past year or so have come to combine some of the most violent crime in France – with the acknowledged spread of fundamentalist Islam among a younger generation born and educated for the most part entirely in France.

One theory is scotched at the outset by everyone you ask in Roubaix. It is not, as Philippe Aziz, author of a recent book states, a city with a non-French majority – however non-French is defined.

More than a third of its population may be of immigrant origin, but everyone stresses that it is not – as Mr Aziz claims – France's first "Muslim" city.

In some districts, though, people "of foreign origin" are in a big majority.

One city official said that this was a "mistake", the result of both negligence and benevolence. "We wouldn't want to assist that sort of concentration today but how can you undo it?" he said.

He also felt the state might keep a closer watch on the mosques, even reduce their number and work with the more moderate clergy. "But there we have a problem: where Islam is concerned, the separation of church and state in France can be a liability."

In the backstreets of the Alma-Gare quarter, near the scene of the recent gunfight, you can see adolescent boys flaunting Arafat-style headgear; bare-headed girls are few and mostly of identifiably Turkish, not North African origin. There are mosques, big and small, and

– it is said – very many more in cellars and converted back-rooms of houses. Islam has claimed even thoroughly French converts: two of those killed in the recent shoot-out were of French origin, a fact that leaves officials and others struggling to find explanations.

Even so, the police and officials of the centre-right council in Roubaix are reluctant to accept the existence of any link between "racketeering", large-scale drug-related crime, and Islamic terrorism.

The drug problem is manifest and blamed on the proximity of the Belgian border (which runs through the edge of Roubaix), the liberal drug laws in the Netherlands and unemployment. Roubaix's south-eastern suburb of Hem is admitted by all to be saturated with drugs.

The appeal of Islamic fundamentalism for disillusioned young people of immigrant parents is also conceded.

There were arrests in Roubaix, as there were in many large French cities, after the summer bout of Islamic terrorism in Paris and Lyons.

Islam supplies a purpose, a faith and an identity to second- and third-generation North Africans who feel let down by the French system.

In Roubaix, these young people are largely French citizens but they complain that they were never treated as "properly" French, never given an equal chance. Their parents' hopes, they say, were betrayed.

While the possibility of links between young Muslims in search of a purpose and criminal violence is something officials – locally and nationally – would prefer to minimise, local people and reporters take it almost for granted.

"Of course, many start off as idealists; they embrace Islam in an attempt to flee drugs and violence," a local reporter told me, "but they are used by others, including some Muslim clerics. They need funds for their 'holy war' and all means to acquire them are good."

According to this theory, the link between organised crime and Islam, if not already proved, is only a matter of time.

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Hizbollah continues to fire rockets as Israel orders 30,000 Lebanese villagers to leave home or face attack

Talks left to US as Israel carries on attack

Syrians seen as key to ceasefire

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Israel ordered a further 30,000 Lebanese villagers to leave their homes or face air and artillery attack yesterday as Hizbollah, the Lebanese guerrilla movement, continued to fire on northern Israel.

Israel expects the US to begin diplomatic moves to put pressure on Syria to curb Hizbollah and set the stage for a ceasefire. There are doubts in Jerusalem, however, that President Hafez al-Assad of Syria will be willing to do this.

Despite Israel's overwhelming military superiority Hizbollah is still firing salvoes of rockets into northern Galilee, where they cause few casualties but have led much of the population to flee or live in shelters. Three Israelis were injured yesterday and five were treated for shock.

Shimon Peres, the Prime Minister, has promised to stop the firing of Katyushas but this may not be feasible by use of air and artillery alone. "This has to be decided on the ground," says Dr Dore Gold at the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv university. "It cannot be decided by air power and videotapes [taken by attacking aircraft]."

The key to resolution of the crisis is Syria, says Dr Gold. Israel denounces Iran as the hidden hand which controls Hizbollah, but this is largely because it has not wanted to demote Syria with whom it has been negotiating a peace treaty in return for Israel relinquishing the Golan Heights. President Assad may not want to restrain Hizbollah until there is a final deal with Israel.

Major General Moshe

Ya'alon, the head of military intelligence, says that if Hizbollah's ability to fire rockets is diminished then it will strike at Israel with suicide bombers or hang gliders. He added that Iranian embassy staff in Beirut had left for Damascus. The Israeli press says senior officials in Israel have received signals from Damascus that it wants to see a new arrangement in south Lebanon. If no agreement is reached with Syria then there will be pressure on Mr Peres to use ground troops, something he says he is determined not to do. It was he who withdrew Israeli troops in 1985 from all but the far south of the country.

The firepower available to the two sides is very unbalanced. A spokesman for the UN peace-keeping force said Israeli gunners pumped 3,000 heavy artillery shells into the south in a 24-hour period up to yesterday morning. Israel also launched 63 air raids. Hizbollah kept up a steady barrage of rockets over the frontier, wounding three Israelis. Of the 23 people killed on both sides in the last week only one has been an Israeli, a soldier killed in south Lebanon last week.

In Jerusalem Mr Peres said he was not ready to negotiate an end to Operation Grapes of Wrath. "It is too early to negotiate," he said when asked what were Israel's conditions for an end to the fighting. "The time is always right for a political initiative," Mr Peres added. "I am not going to offer but I think that there are other parties that will offer and we shall have a good look at it."

The conflict has so far much improved the chances of Mr Peres winning the election on 29 May. He regularly appears in a blue, military style-jacket. It is now difficult for Benjamin



A lone fireman tackles a blaze in the southern Lebanese town of Nabatiyah following Israeli artillery attacks

Photograph: AP/Mohamed Zatar

Civilians the main casualties in toll of death

Since Israel opened its bombardment of Lebanon last Thursday, 23 Lebanese civilians have been killed and at least 80 wounded. In the previous three days, a Lebanese teenager and an Israeli occupation soldier were killed and 13 Israelis wounded. Since the start of the Israeli assault, not a single Israeli soldier or Hizbollah guerrilla has been reported killed.

Among the Lebanese civilian victims are: Khatija Deeb, 27, an unidentified male of about 60; Rima al-Youssef, 2; Rana al-Youssef, 12; Lara al-Youssef, age unknown; Itissam al-Youssef, 13; Ghofran Karim, 25; Ali Monem, about 100; Hussein Monem, 18; Wajeh Monem, age unknown; and Absha Shaashou, 35 - all killed by Israeli shellfire on the village of Yohmor, in the southern Bekaa valley. And Mahmoud Daher, 90; Mariam Geha, one month; Honein Geha, 3; Zienab Geha, 7; Houdou Alakleh, 11; Noha Alakleh, 35; and Mona Shweik, 35 - all killed in an ambulance attacked by Israeli helicopter at Hannieh, southern Lebanon.

EU states angered by France's solo search for ceasefire

JOHN LICHFIELD

European governments were struggling yesterday to find a common response to the bloodshed in Lebanon after France began an apparently doomed attempt to broker a ceasefire single-handed.

There was thinly disguised irritation in other EU capitals that Paris had ignored the machinery of common European foreign policy-making, and dispatched its Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, to Israel, Lebanon and Syria.

Senior foreign ministry officials from the 15 EU countries were meeting in Brussels yesterday to try to prepare some kind of common statement or initiative for a meeting of European foreign ministers in Luxembourg next week.

One EU diplomat told Reuters that the unilateral French action would "go down like a lead balloon, not because of any jealousies but because the French move is hollow. There's nothing in it."

The French intervention received a similarly discouraging response in Israel itself.

Asked by journalists what his conditions might be to end the five-day rocket and artillery bombardment of Lebanon, the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, declared: "It is too early to negotiate."

Some French commentators also criticised their government's decision to go it alone.



Chirac: Proclaimed backing for Lebanese sovereignty

The *Libération* newspaper said that it was prompted not by any genuine hope of doing good, but by embarrassment that Israel - a close ally of France - had launched the bombardment one week after President Jacques Chirac had proclaimed his support for the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon, a former French protectorate.

Britain, meanwhile, issued a statement expressing "concern" at the "growing humanitarian problems" of the tens of thousands of Lebanese civilians forced to flee the fighting. The Foreign Office statement called on both sides to "break the cycle of violence."

The Director of Middle East Affairs at the Foreign Office, John Shepherd, flew to Beirut yesterday to talk to the

Lebanese government. The cautious Foreign Office statement contrasted, in tone if not in substance, with remarks made by the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Portillo, who began a long-scheduled visit to Israel yesterday. Mr Portillo placed the entire blame for the civilian exodus from southern Lebanon on Hizbollah, which, he said, had fired its rockets at northern Israel from the heart of civilian areas.

"It is the right of every country to have security and defend itself..." Mr Portillo said. "I don't believe that Israel wishes to kill any civilians and for that reason civilians have been withdrawing for their own security."

The US response to the fighting remains low-key, with the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, telephoning his Syrian counterpart, Farouq al-Sharaa, the Israeli Foreign Minister, Ehud Barak, and Lebanese leaders. But President Clinton, engaged in a round-the-world tour, has shown no sign of willingness to dispatch Mr Christopher or another senior official to the region.

The White House spokesman, Mike McCurry, told reporters accompanying the President: "Obviously our goal is to see what steps can be taken now to restore calm to the border and to minimise the violence which is affecting citizens on both sides of the border." Washington blames Hizbollah for the fighting.



Michael Portillo (right), who is visiting Israel, with Shimon Peres yesterday

Photograph: AFP

Press highlights children's plight

ADEL DARWISH

Pro-Western Arab leaders who urged peace with Israel are being pressed to adopt a tougher response to Israel's attacks, as public opinion, which is increasingly sympathetic to the Iranian-backed Hizbollah's attacks on Israel, seeks collective Arab action.

Whether in Jordan, which has normal diplomatic ties with Israel, or in Saudi Arabia, press comment and cartoons carry a similar message. "The children of south Lebanon call upon the powerful leaders of [last month's anti-terror summit in] Sharm el Sheikh to lift their suf-

fering," the London-based *Al-Hayat* declared.

A cartoon in the Saudi-owned *Asharq al-Awsat* accused Israel's Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, of hitting Lebanese children to further his electoral chances.

Many papers highlighted the call by Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, to President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt to use Cairo's 17-year-old diplomatic ties with Israel to stop the attacks. Mr Mubarak is embarrassed, because of accusations that he was naively optimistic about peace talks between Israel and Syria. Mr Mubarak, whose security forces continue to crack down on Is-

lamic extremists, has been accused by the opposition of allowing Israel to subject the Arab people to its rule.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Amr Moussa, has cancelled a trip to Turkey. Officially, he needed to stay in Cairo for tomorrow's emergency meeting of Arab League foreign ministers. Privately, diplomats say it was a gesture of support to Syria, which hitlerly attacked a Turkish-Israeli accord allowing Israel to use Turkish air space and, perhaps, its bases for military training.

Powerful players like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which compete for the leadership of both

the Arab and the Muslim worlds, encourage their official or semi-official media to condemn Israel's action. No paper, however, has criticised attacks against Israeli civilians by Hizbollah fighters who are referred to in most Arab media as "Lebanese resistance."

Diplomats agree Syria holds the key to settling this round of violence, but "no single Arab nation attending tomorrow's Arab League meeting in Cairo is expected to even ask Syria to pressurise Hizbollah to halt its attacks," said an Egyptian official yesterday, "while Israel remains an illegal occupation force in south Lebanon."

Public bask in spoils of TV war

"I don't think the operation will stop the Katyusha rockets," said Iwo, the owner of a delicatessen in Shamai street in Jerusalem, writes Patrick Cockburn. "Only the Syrians can do that - the bastards."

Israelis overwhelmingly approve of the decision of the government to launch an air and artillery offensive in south Lebanon last week. Differences only emerge over the likely effectiveness of the attacks in achieving their declared aim of stopping the Katyusha attacks.

At the other end of the street, Elan, who manages a television and electronics shop, also believed that Israel's five-day old Operation Grapes of Wrath would not alone prevent Hizbollah, the Lebanese guerrilla movement, from firing rockets.

"I think we are going to send in ground troops," he said. "I think we are going to do it after there is not a single Lebanese left in south Lebanon." He thought that this would ensure that there would be no Israeli casualties because "the shelling and bombing will have cleaned everything by then."

The popularity of the operation is explained by the fact that most Israelis see it as a defensive measure. This is not affected by the disproportion between the few dozen Katyushas fired by Hizbollah on a single day and the 4,000 shells fired by Israeli artillery and over 200 airstrikes.

Regardless of how effective the operation is going to prove many Israelis simply want to hit back. "They shouldn't have let Hizbollah develop this chutzpah," says Shaul, who said that General Ariel Sharon should have been allowed to finish the job of pacifying Lebanon during the invasion of 1982.

Shimon Peres, the Israeli prime minister, says that the aim of the offensive is limited. As a result, there have been none of the protests seen during the 1982 invasion. To Israelis, Hizbollah is associated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the Palestinian Islamic organisations which carried out four suicide bombings in February and March which killed 63 people. All three movements are seen as a common enemy.

So far the war has been cheap for Israel. Israeli parents are not worried that their children will be killed. In Jerusalem there is little of the sense of emergency which was visible after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin last November or after the suicide bombings earlier this year.

For most Israelis it is a television war. Electoral politics, too, plays its part. An assistant in Iwo's shop argued: "The war is geared to the election on 29 May."

Israeli and international television exaggerate the sense of threat felt by Israelis close to the border, because it focuses on the small number of people who were wounded or shocked by an explosion. After a rocket had hit a eucalyptus outside an apartment house he owned in Kiryat Shmona at the weekend, Yoel Spongini said: "Now look at these people who lived here. None of them are crying. Nevertheless, the public mood could change. 'What would have happened,' asks Professor Israel Shahak, a political commentator, 'if the Katyusha which hit the roof of that shelter had penetrated and killed all the children inside?'"

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Allied peace-keepers: UK and France could be key players when Dayton mandate expires

Nato likely to extend its stay in Bosnia

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

A continued role for Nato in Bosnia after the 60,000-strong peace implementation force (I-For) is due to leave after its year-long mandate ends in mid-December is looking increasingly likely. The official British and US position that everyone must leave when the 20,000-strong US component of I-For departs is "untenable", according to one expert.

While any discussion of the "post-I-For" options and "Day 366" is still regarded as heresy in official circles, it is looking increasingly likely that a smaller European Nato force, led by Britain and France, will stay. A decision on the exact nature of foreign involvement in Bosnia after I-For's mission ends will need to be made soon, probably at the Peace Implementation Review Conference in Rome in June.

The Nato Secretary-General, Javier Solana, said in February that there would be no public discussion of the post-I-For question until 18 April, the deadline for withdrawal of all the former warring factions' heavy weapons. If the 60,000 mainly Nato troops and tens of thousands of vehicles are to be withdrawn by the end of December, they will have to start withdrawing in August.

Michael Fortillo, the British Secretary of State for Defence, and his advisers still favour the "in together, stay together out together" policy which drove the deployment of I-For. They have so far rejected the idea, which has been widely mooted, of European states maintaining a

military presence after a US withdrawal following the US presidential election.

When I-For was deployed the idea was to make a spectacular demonstration of joint force, and to stick together for a year before withdrawing – a policy which, so far, has seemed to work.

Some commentators believe the contributor nations are sticking to that line in order to maintain respect from the former warring factions. But Michael Williams, a former UN director of information in Zagreb who is now with the International Institute for Strategic Studies, yesterday said "it is imperative there be some continuing military presence, preferably under the Nato umbrella, post-December. Dayton has secured a ceasefire which is now in its sixth month. I believe we are far more likely to have a durable peace in Bosnia if there is a military presence there for another 12 months."

The practised organisation of Nato has proved highly successful in establishing an unchallenged authority in Bosnia, respected by the Bosnian government, Croats and Serbs.

The inchoate organisation of the civilian reconstruction effort, under the "high representative", Carl Bildt, has not, according to observers. Therefore, to forgo the authority and efficiency of Nato and hand over to a disparate civilian organisation would be foolhardy.

While a renewed UN presence to co-ordinate any remaining military components with civilian aid organisations cannot be ruled out, experts consider it unlikely. Nor, they

believe, would there be any value in transferring the Nato flag to that of the Western European Union (WEU).

However, Nato has had remarkable success so far. And, for the first time in 50 years, the French now work in harmony with the Atlantic alliance.

Nato is also a good guarantee of continued US involvement in non-direct military roles, such as transport, medical aid, air cover and intelligence.

A Nato force of 20,000 to 25,000 troops, without US troops on the ground, therefore looks a feasible option.

Britain and France could provide such a force alone, if necessary, to maintain the success which Nato's reputation and organisation has achieved, sources said.

Once the warring factions are separated and their heavy weapons destroyed or corralled, I-For will have fulfilled the main part of its mission and can be diverted to other tasks, including reconstruction and securing and investigating the sites of alleged atrocities.

If reconstruction goes according to plan, the main requirement by December will be for a large civilian construction effort and assistance with policing and law and order.

Separated by a four-kilometre wide zone, and with their heavy weapons in storage, the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian government forces will find it difficult to menace each other. Hostility is more likely at a low level, and between Muslims and Croats, who will not be separated clearly by the demarcation lines in the Dayton agreement.



Poling fun: Financiers and businessmen in Italy are worried about the effect on the economy of young people's apparent reluctance to take on adult responsibilities. The advertisement on the bus tries to shame them by asking 'Still living at home with Mama?' Photograph: AP

Centre-left coalition senses victory

Castellammare della Stabia — If there was anywhere for Italy's centre-left coalition to feel optimistic in the final week of general election campaigning, it was surely here in this down-at-heel industrial town in the Bay of Naples, at a rousing outdoor rally this past weekend.

With the setting sun glowing through the palms and plane trees of the municipal park, the coalition's leaders — Romano Prodi, his deputy Walter Veltroni and the widely popular mayor of Naples, Antonio Bassolino — were greeted with passion and optimism by an adoring crowd and, for the first time in this bruising campaign, actually looked and sounded like they were on their way to victory.

Mr Bassolino, who has restored badly needed confidence to the chaos of Naples in the past two years, was treated like a rock star; and even Mr Prodi, not the most inspiring of public speakers, was received with thunderous applause. Everything, from their proposals to bring employment to this depressed corner of Italy to their

Italian election: Sunday's vote is too close to call, but the right may be losing ground, says Andrew Gumbel

pauses at the centre-right led by Silvio Berlusconi and Gianfranco Fini, met with cheers and ecstatic banner-waving.

"As the campaign goes on, we are getting stronger and they are getting weaker. They want to divide Italy while we will work to unite it," boomed Mr Veltroni. "At the next G7 meeting there will be two new faces, Tony Blair and Romano Prodi."

The rally was an important morale-booster since the centre-left (known by the name of its symbol, the Olive Tree) has precious few strongholds in the Italian South and will be relying on the reputation of men like Mr Bassolino to win over its conservative and traditionalist electorate.

There have been other reasons to be cheerful in the past few days. Although opinion polls cannot be published in the last three weeks, a clutch of private surveys suggest that the initiative seized by Mr Berlusconi in the early stages of the campaign has now ebbed and that support is swinging in the other direction. The new polls show the centre-left slightly ahead, although still within the statistical margin for error.

The centre-right has also made a number of gaffes. Last week, Mr Fini suggested his side might abolish pay-as-you-earn income tax for company employees, only to retract the remark a few days later when some of his own colleagues said he was effectively sanctioning mass tax evasion.

Then, over the weekend, Mr Berlusconi argued that a victory for the centre-left might spell the abolition of free and fair elections in the future — a remark so explosive from a man himself suspected of authoritarian tendencies that it was effectively an own goal. "Berlusconi is not afraid of future elections," retorted Mr Veltroni. "He is afraid of next Sunday because he thinks he is going to lose."

It would be a rash punter, however, to bet on the outcome at this stage. For all the centre-left's advantages — its effective grassroots campaigning, its array of respected senior figures, and the favour it has found with the international community including the financial markets — it is nevertheless weighed down by heavy problems, particularly in the underdeveloped and Mafia-ridden South.

So widely has the Olive Tree cast its shadow, grouping barely reformed Communists with unapologetic free-marketisers, conservatives, that it risks considerable internal incoherence should it reach office. Originally, Mr Prodi had hoped that the coalition's great strength would be the quality of its candidates, but the logic of coalition politics has led to a carve-up of seats and candidates that has — particularly in the South — left plenty to be desired.

Many voters have found that their prospective local MPs are

familiar figures from a tarnished and corrupt past whom, they fear, may be susceptible to pressure from the Mafia and other insidious influences if re-elected now. In some cases, these candidates have been imposed from Rome at the expense of popular and effective sitting parliamentarians.

This tendency is particularly unfortunate in the Italian South, which has consistently suffered from clientelistic decision-making imposed from above, and a lack of genuine local autonomy. Nobody is more disappointed than Mr Prodi himself, who according to his friends is keen to establish a new selection procedure as soon as this election is over.

The candidate problem highlights Mr Prodi's overall weakness, both within the power structure of the coalition's party leaders, and as a candidate for the premiership. "He may be knowledgeable and full of ideas, but he is not a communicator. When he opens his mouth he tends to send people to sleep, even his friends," lamented one supporter.

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China takes pride in consulting Hong Kong for first time in decade

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

According to yesterday's Peking-backed newspapers in Hong Kong, China has scored a great success by carrying out a two-day consultation during which a number of organisations and individuals gave their views on how the territory's new leadership was to be selected. The fact that the exercise was dogged by protests, some uncharacteristically violent, and that students who expressed unwelcome views were thrown out of the meetings, was seen as confirmation of China's determination not to allow instability to break out when Peking resumes sovereignty next year.

The newspapers conveying these views were supported in a fashion which illustrates how China's old revolutionary "united-front" tactics are being deployed as non-Communist advisers to the Chinese government were trotted out to say how useful the consultations had been.

This was not the view of three legislators and their supporters who yesterday said they would be staging a 50-hour mobile hunger strike in protest at the way the consultation ex-

Process is marked by weekend of protests

ercise had largely shunned anyone expressing dissenting views. The hunger-strikers have vowed to sit in a truck following the movements of Lu Ping, China's most senior official responsible for Hong Kong affairs, who is making a rare visit to the colony as part of the consultation exercise.

The consultation is the first of its kind in almost a decade since China sought views on the drafting of the Basic Law, the mini-constitution for the territory after the Chinese takeover.

The hunger strike, which is largely a symbolic gesture, follows a weekend of protest which attracted only limited participation but appeared to have widespread public backing, as reflected in opinion polls and radio phone-in shows.

"While many people in Hong Kong do not take to the streets to protest", wrote the politician Emily Lau in yesterday's *South China Morning Post*, "Mr Lu should not take this as a sign they condone the Chinese gov-

ernment's habitual refusal to consider dissenting views."

Returning from a visit to Britain, the Governor, Chris Patten, said he too was concerned about China's reluctance to listen to representatives from political parties which consistently secure the highest number of votes in Hong Kong elections.

At a closed session yesterday Chinese officials and their Hong Kong advisers started a post-mortem on the results of the consultations, which were primarily aimed at determining the formation of an election committee to choose the first Chief Executive, who will head the first post-colonial administration, and the mechanism to select the members of a temporary legislature to replace the existing one, which will be dissolved after China resumes power.

Meanwhile, China's supporters in Hong Kong are planning a series of events to muster support for the new order, while the hitherto fragmented democracy camp is showing new signs of cohesion as it becomes increasingly clear that China intends to give its members absolutely no say in the future of the territory.

IN BRIEF

Sirens wail as South Korea stages air drill

Seoul — Sirens wailed across South Korea as air force fighters posing as communist invaders streaked over major cities in South Korea yesterday in a major civil defence drill held in response to North Korean "sabre-rattling", on the eve of a visit by President Bill Clinton. F-16 fighters roared through the airspace of Seoul and 37 other cities as pedestrians ran for shelters. *Reuters*

Two Russian battalions leave Chechnya

Moscow — Russia pulled out two battalions from rebel Chechnya as part of President Boris Yeltsin's peace plan, but fighting continued and separatists shot down a Russian helicopter killing four servicemen. Russian television said the units withdrew from bases 100 miles northeast of the regional capital Grozny. *Reuters*

US holds Kurd on passport fraud charge

Washington — The head of the American Kurdish Information Office was charged with passport fraud after an investigation indicated he had assumed the identity of a man killed in a car crash 25 years ago. US authorities said Kani Xulam is thought to be a leader of the extremist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). *Reuters*

Russia holds back Azeri's extradition

Moscow — Russia has asked Azerbaijan for more evidence before it agrees to the extradition of former Azeri president Ayaz Mutalibov on a charge of treason, according to a senior aide to the Russian prosecutor-general. Mr Mutalibov, who was ousted in 1992, was arrested in Moscow on Thursday. *Reuters*

Activists sentenced in Bahrain

Manama, Bahrain — A state security court has sentenced 10 opposition activists to between one and five years in prison following their conviction on sabotage and arson charges, newspapers reported. The prisoners were accused of taking part in the recent wave of anti-government protests. *AP*

Kazakhstan creates national wildlife park

Moscow — Kazakhstan took steps yesterday to protect its endangered species, including the snow leopard, with the creation of the 600,000-acre Zailiysky Alatau National Park, south of the capital Alma Ata. *AP*

\$6m judgment upheld on Marley estate

Washington — The US Supreme Court let stand a \$6m judgment against the late reggae star Bob Marley's lawyer and accountant, found by jury to have fraudulently plundered his estate. It rejected arguments that Marley's estate sued the men too late. *AP*



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'Golf War': Developers abandon plan to build new course after protester is killed and 18 are wounded in shoot-out with police

Mexico's battling peasants keep spirit of Zapata alive



Ernesto Zedillo: Speech to mark Zapata anniversary

PHIL DAVISON
Latin America Correspondent

Elderly Indian peasants in the Mexican state of Morelos truly believe local revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata never died on 10 April 1919. Even though the Mexican army laid his body out in a town square after ambushing him, the superstitious peasants believed he had taken to the hills with his famous white stallion.

That is why the elderly sincerely believe Zapata was present last Wednesday, 10 April, when Morelos peasants were ambushed by police on a coun-

try road near the little town of Tepoztlán. The outcome was gory: one peasant killed and 18 wounded. But the incident resulted in a peasant victory over big business of which the great moustachioed revolutionary would have been proud.

The peasants were residents of Tepoztlán, a small town 35 miles south of Mexico City and a stone's throw from Zapata's birthplace. Some were his direct descendants, others were sons of the men who fought alongside him during the 1910-17 revolution.

They had been heading in a convoy of buses to the town of Cuernavaca, where Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo was giving a speech to mark the 77th anniversary of Zapata's death, traditionally a big day on the Mexican calendar. But the peasants had not gone to listen.

They had gone to protest against plans to build a golf course and tourism complex around Tepoztlán, one of Mexico's most picturesque Indian villages, which they said would ruin the landscape, endanger wildlife, use up scarce water supplies and desecrate pre-Columbian burial sites.

They had occupied the town of 13,000 since last September, erecting barbed wire barricades and taking over the town hall, after the developers began bulldozing the golf course to be designed by Jack Nicklaus's Golden Bear Course Management company. Local media hailed the stand-off as the Golf War.

To prevent the protesters reaching the president, policemen were dispatched to block their path at the town of Tlatizapán. After news of a clash emerged, not for the first time in Mexico, the police insisted they had been unarmed and that the gunfire must have come from the peasants. An amateur

video confirmed, however, that the police were armed and opened fire - demonstrating that Mr Zedillo still has some way to go in his pledge to improve his nation's human rights record. Six policemen have been charged with murder, 54 others with abuse of authority.

A 62-year-old Tepoztlán resident called Marcos Olmedo was killed in the gunfire but his fellow-protesters saw him as a martyr who did not die in vain. At the weekend, saying the violence had undermined investors' confidence, the developers ceded to the locals and called off the golf project. "The

conditions no longer exist that would guarantee our investment," said a spokesman for the Grupo KS investment company. "But the land is legally ours and we will not give it up, although we don't know what we will finally do with it."

That suggested the conflict may not be finally over. But after their victory, the peasants appear to have the bit between their teeth.

Demanding justice for the victims of the shooting, they have vowed "to fight on" until the state government of Morelos resigns. The Golf War may yet become the Golf Revolution.



Jack Nicklaus: Company was to have designed the course

South Africa begins laying ghosts to rest

ROBERT BLOCK
Johannesburg

South Africa's official journey into its past, to try to heal the wounds of its conscience and come to terms with the brutality of its history, began yesterday amid a media circus in a crowded city hall in East London, in the Eastern Cape.

Journalists from around the world, a few prominent South Africans and many ordinary citizens packed the ornate colonial building for the historic event. They came to hear three women and one man - all of them victims of apartheid - bare their pain at the first public session of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

After lighting a candle as both a symbol of peace and to remember those who died in the struggle against apartheid, the body's chairman, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, reminded everyone why they were there.

"We are charged to unearth the truth about our dark past; to lay the ghosts of that past so that they will not return to

haunt us; and that we will thereby contribute to the healing of a traumatised and wounded people - for all of us in South Africa are wounded people - and in this manner to promote national unity and reconciliation."

It was the only attempt at eloquence on a day which really belonged to the first people to testify. Each seemed to have been chosen not only to represent a section of society which had suffered during apartheid but also to show the Commission's impartiality. There was the widow of a man killed in police custody, and two women whose loved ones disappeared after being arrested. And finally, there was a white man who was crippled in an attack by black anti-apartheid guerrillas.

However, the first testimony seemed to make the highest impact, both on the people in East London and on those throughout the country, watching or listening to the live broadcasts.

Noble Mohapi was calm, as she talked about the death in detention of her husband

Mapetla in 1976, the year student riots swept the country. Police said he had hanged himself in his cell with his jeans.

But Mrs Mohapi's testimony did not begin with her husband's detention or even her own bouts of torture. It was full of the minutiae of life lived under repression. "I was full of hate when my husband died," she said. "I hated anyone who was a policeman. I hated them for the oppression. Now I want to share the difficult times."

Graceme Simpson, the director of the Johannesburg-based Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, commented that Mrs Mohapi's testimony was the best endorsement the Commission could have hoped for. She showed how the Commission gave victims a chance to not only tell their tale but also to restore their dignity.

Technically, the Commission has two years to exhume the truth of 30 years of apartheid. But that yesterday's hearing took place at all is something of a miracle. A bomb scare forced a brief recess in the middle of



Toni Lilian Mazawi (left) is comforted by a well-wisher before giving evidence about the killing of her son, Ncediwe Mfeti (right) was to give evidence about the abduction and disappearance of her husband

Mrs Mohapi's testimony. It was a stark reminder of the depth of hatred many South Africans feel towards the Commission's attempts to steer a course through white demands for amnesia about the past and black demands for justice.

The idea of a truth commission has been dogged by criticism since its very inception at negotiations to end apartheid three years ago. Africans feared it masked a witch-hunt against whites. Apartheid victims believed it sacrificed justice for reconciliation. Black liberation soldiers bristled at the idea that their excess would be equated with crimes committed

by former government hit-men. Even more dangerous than a bomb scare to the continued proceedings are two court cases being brought today.

One case is being brought by families of prominent apartheid victims, including the widow of Steve Biko. They claim the commission's ability to grant in-

demnity to all perpetrators of human rights abuses who fully confess their misdeeds violates their internationally recognised right to seek redress through the courts. The other case is being brought by perpetrators of human rights abuses who do not want their names divulged in hearing proceedings.

Zoo tells a tall story to US peace force

Budapest (Reuters) - The American contingent of the Nato peace implementation force for Bosnia (1-For) based in Hungary has been asked by Budapest Zoo to fly three giraffes from Frankfurt.

The Hungarian entrepreneur Gabor Varszegi bought the three Zambian giraffes last November as a present for the zoo. Due to veterinary regulations, the animals can only be brought into the country by air, and the only civilian aircraft large enough to take the three-metre tall animals is the Boeing 747.

A flight could easily be arranged from the Zambian capital Lusaka to Frankfurt but there are no regular jumbo jet flights from Frankfurt to Budapest, zoo director Miklos Persanyi said. However, there are regular US military transport flights to the Jászard base in southern Hungary using aircraft large enough to accommodate the young giraffes.

Mr Persanyi said his zoo badly needed the animals as its only giraffe was 20 years old, well past the usual lifespan.

"We asked for US military transportation as a last resort, after months of fruitless effort," he said yesterday.

US on alert as terrorist anniversary approaches

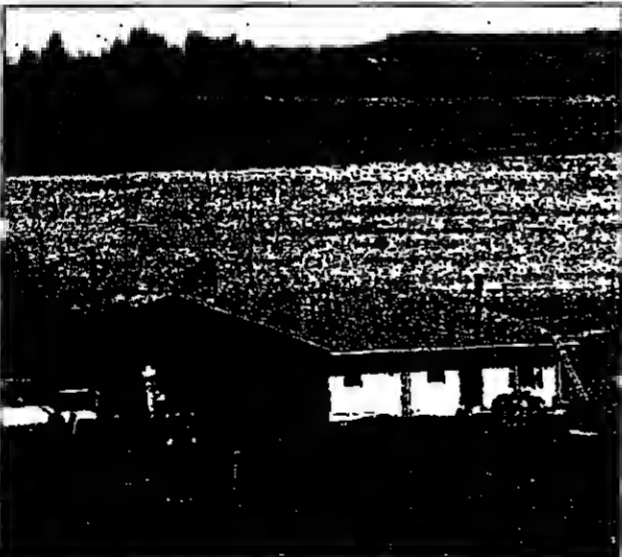
TIM CORNWELL
Los Angeles

US government buildings have gone on a heightened state of alert for this week's anniversary of the worst act of domestic terrorism in America's history.

It was a year ago on Friday that former soldier Timothy McVeigh allegedly planted the home-made truck bomb that exploded outside the Alfred Murrah federal government building, killing 168 people and injuring another 400.

There are no reports that the shadowy collection of so-called militia members, tax protesters, survivalists, white supremacists and others who denounce the US federal authorities plan a show of strength on 19 April. But one private centre in Atlanta that keeps track of some 12,000 names linked to the American far right insists that the threat of home-grown terrorism, far from receding since the shock of the bombing, has actually increased sharply in the past year.

"Unless we take decisive steps now to respond to this threat, it is only a matter of time before the country endures another nightmare like the Oklahoma City tragedy," wrote Morris Dees, chief counsel of the Southern Poverty Law Centre, in a warning letter to US Attorney General Janet Reno last week. In a new report the centre identifies over 800 right-wing "Patriot" organisations, including 441 so-called militias, said to be preparing for combat



Under siege: The remote ranch-house where leaders of the Freemen of Montana are being held at bay by the FBI

with the federal government.

Though numbers of members are hard to pin down it was Mr Dees and others who warned in the months before the Oklahoma City bombing of a rising security risk. Gauging the true threat from the American far right, whose anti-government war-mongering apparently inspired Mr McVeigh, is as elusive a goal as ever. But from Chicago to Nebraska, US authorities this week were discreetly reconfiguring government buildings with bomb-sniffing dogs and extra security guards. Criminal intelligence officers in Ohio, the *New York Times* reported, circulated a letter to po-

lice chiefs and local sheriffs reminding them that 19 April is also the anniversary of the fire ball at Waco, Texas, in which David Koresh and some 80 cult followers perished. The badly bungled siege of the cult compound by federal agents is still a cause célèbre for militia activists and the gun-rights lobby. "It is for this reason that we recommend an internal alert for any possible violence on April 19th, 1996," the letter said, urging "all due caution".

The so-called militias sprang up across the US in 1994 promising to resist a conspiracy of tyranny emanating from Washington by force if neces-

sary, and defend citizens' rights to bear arms.

At town hall meetings which drew hundreds of people, meo in camouflage warned that America was in danger of a takeover by the UN. Mainstream support shrank amid images of children's bodies being pulled from the wreckage in Oklahoma. But Mr Dees and others appear newly concerned by a hard-core who are committed to paranoid conspiratorial beliefs and often already outside the law.

"We refer to this as the consolidation of the whackos," said Christine Kaufman, of the Montana Human Rights Network. For four years Ms Kaufman has watched the growth of the Montana Freemen, an alliance of anti-tax protesters, chequered and embittered farmers whose leaders who are now under siege by the FBI at a remote ranch.

In Michigan, which earned a reputation as a militia hot bed after members performed military-style exercises for TV cameras, meetings still gather occasionally to burn the UN flag and rail against property taxes, said Richard Lobenthal, who runs the Michigan office of the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish-sponsored group that monitors racist and neo-Nazi organisations.

"They are still as much of a threat as they always were," he said. "Anytime you've got twenty or thirty guys in semi-automatic guns... there is a danger they will flip out."

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Soldier kills 14 in Indonesian airport

Jakarta (Reuters) - An Indonesian soldier ran wild and shot dead at least 10 military colleagues and four civilians yesterday at a remote airport in Irian Jaya.

Thirteen other people were reported wounded. The gunfire broke out at Timika airport when a plane carrying the bodies of two soldiers, believed to have been hacked to death by tribesmen, made a fuel stop. The soldier, understood to be a friend of one of the two dead

men on the plane, was wounded in the leg by other soldiers who returned his fire near an army-run aircraft hangar.

Details of the shooting remained sketchy but the soldier had apparently been assigned to escort the bodies of the two soldiers killed at the weekend in the remote village of Mapunduma.

Jakarta-based diplomats said there was no apparent link between Monday's shootings and the rioting by local tribespeople

last month in the mining town of Timika; activists said the rioting underlined resentment towards settlers from other parts of Indonesia who, attracted by the mine, came to live in the town.

Timika and the surrounding area, overlooked by jagged peaks and surrounded by jungle, was tense but calm after the attack which took place at around dawn.

One Timika resident said: "A soldier at the airport got mad

after learning that one of the two dead soldiers had been his friend. He then fired his gun into the people standing there."

Mapunduma, where villagers live in primitive conditions 100 miles from Timika, was the scene of the kidnapping on 8 January of 26 Indonesians and Europeans by separatist rebels.

Eleven of the captives, including four Britons and two Dutch nationals, are still being held in the dense jungle.

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obituaries / gazette

William K. Everson

William K. Everson was a film historian of the first rank, a popularist, rather than an academic, responsible for many books, hundreds of articles and thousands of programme notes – but above all, he loved teaching.

He was a brilliant teacher. I have often sat in on his lectures and wished that I could recall exactly what he said and how he said it. Yet this was not his most significant achievement.

He was also the world's greatest film collector. Unlike so many of the breed, he was not secretive; he was extraordinarily generous. And generosity sums up the man's character; if he recognised in you some enthusiasm for films, he would give whatever you needed, whether it be his time, his knowledge of the films themselves.

When I first went to New York, in 1964, to research my book *The Parade is Gone By...* I knew hardly anybody in the city apart from Everson. He was as busy as he always was, and should have told me to return when he had some free time. Instead, he invited me at midnight and stayed up, showing me unique copies of silent films, until the early hours. This went on for three weeks. He also gave me introductions to stars and directors I wanted to meet – thanks to him, I met Lillian Gish. He answered all my questions, and by so doing gave me a groundwork in early cinema I could have got from no one else.

Everson had an extraordinary ability to convey enthusiasm. He was a gifted writer, and his programme notes were so vivid they made you long to see the film. Yet if you couldn't get to the show, he made you feel so familiar with the style and atmosphere of the film you could have passed an exam on the subject. I remember his description of Maurice Tourneur's 1922 *Lorna Doone*; it was so poetic and so thrilling I instantly invested in a copy of the film.

It was not as poetic as Everson, alas, but it sparked a love affair with Tourneur, which was

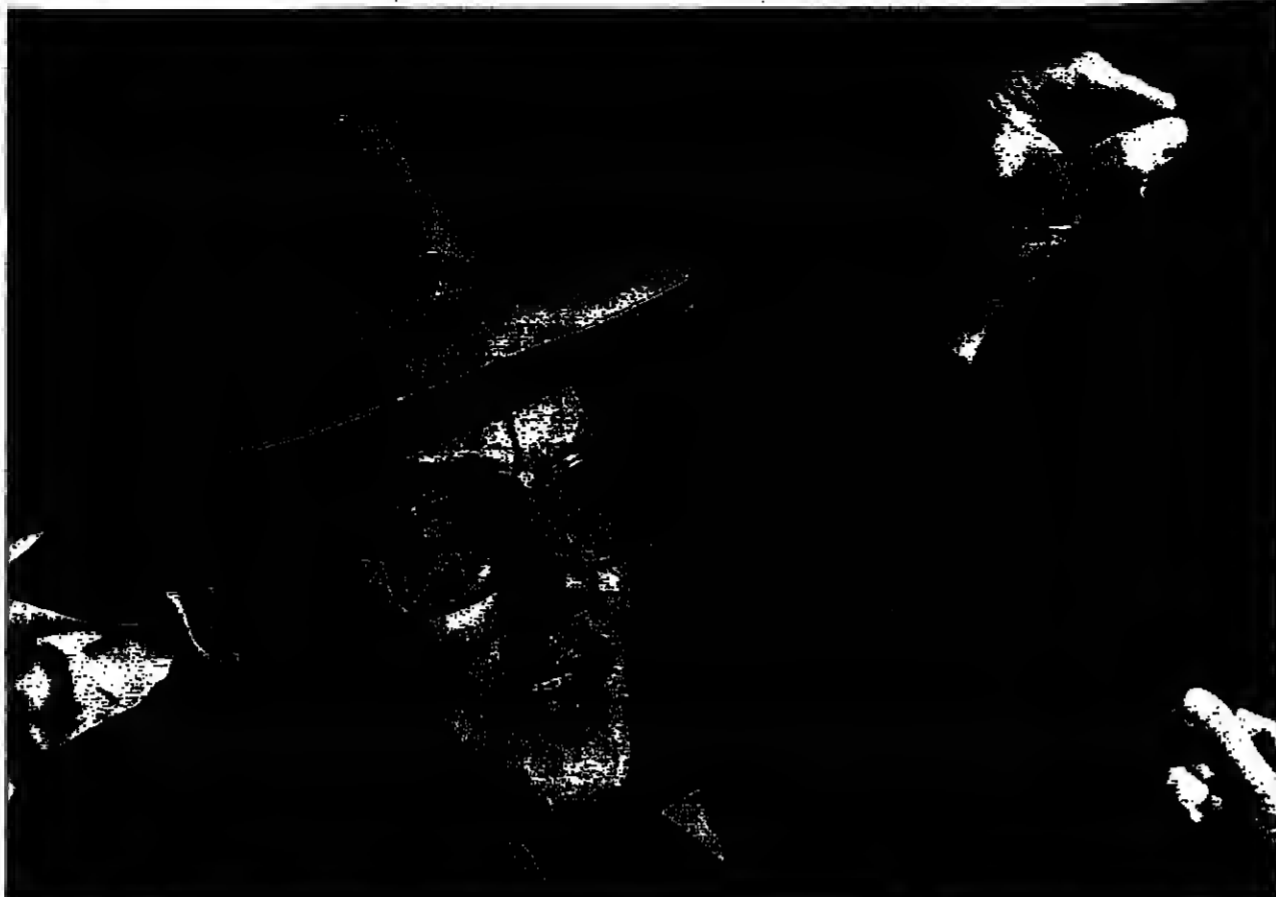
eventually required when I discovered the glories of his earlier films. Many of these were shown to me by Everson himself, and he introduced me to a collector who had been a cameraman in the silent era. Don Malkames had installed a camera in his home capable of showing obscure gauges like 28mm – and one stunningly tinted 28mm print was the Tourneur production of *Tilly* (1915). Later, when a 16mm dupe was struck from it, Everson sent me one, downplaying his generosity by pretending it was "surplus to requirements".

Bill Everson was born in England. His name was Keith William Everson, but he loved the work of American director William K. Howard and switched his name to match. He was taken to the cinema when he was about a year old – to see *Al Jolson in The Singing Fool* (1928), ironically – but he could not be expected to remember the event. The first film he was conscious of seeing was what he called "a perfectly dreadful British film" called *The Maid of the Mountains* (1932), an operetta. From that point on, he had a distinct recollection of what he saw, because going to the cinema during the Depression was very much of an event.

It wasn't until he saw John Ford's *The Whole Town's Talking* (1935) that he became conscious of dialogue. "From that point on I was really hooked."

Everson had been collecting film magazines even before he could read them – in fact, he learned to read by picking his way through the articles on his favourite players. He was top boy at school, until he won a scholarship to Isleworth County School – a school which took only scholarship boys. "And of course it was during the war and the classes I liked – English and history – were always being cancelled because of bombing raids and the classes I hated – geography and physics – were never interrupted."

He used to subscribe to trade



The world's greatest film collector: Everson looks at a strip from a unique copy of a 1912 Vitaphone film, 1979. Photograph: Kevin Brownlow

papers, and in one he saw an ad for a company in Wardour Street which wanted a publicity man. "I didn't think there was any chance of my getting the job – I was 13, going on 14 – but I felt it would be good experience just to go up to London to see what it was all about." He knew that if they asked him questions about films he could answer – and he got the job. "They realised they could pay me peanuts," he glories in the experience, even though he made a lot of mistakes, and he worked happily until the army caught up with him in 1947. He was posted to Germany – another boon, because he had just read Siegfried Kracauer's book on German film history. "Censor-

ship then was very strong and anything with violence was taken out so they were reissuing a lot of the quieter German films from the 1930s, and German versions of American films like *The Big Trail* (1930), which I never thought I'd see, so it was a great education."

When he was demobbed, his two closest friends, Alex and Richard Gordon, had emigrated to the United States. Feeling there was no hope of advancement in the England of the austerity years, he decided to join them. After a period as relief manager for a chain of news theatres (the Monseigneur), he left for New York – where he quickly found a job with Monogram (later Al-

lied Artists). He was delighted to discover that movie companies were transferring thousands of their old films to 16mm for the television market, and bootleg prints could be acquired by collectors. This was a risky business – and in later years downright dangerous – but several companies had good reason to be grateful. For Bill Everson rescued prints of titles which they had destroyed.

In the post-war period, the only people who retained any respect for silent films were elderly fans. The new generation regarded them as hilarious – and a TV producer called Paul Killeen marketed a series called *Movie Museum*, which showed old films with a jokey narration.

He employed Bill Everson as adviser, and Everson gently but firmly taught him the error of his ways. He had acquired a great respect for the silent era (as he acquired more and more silent films), and soon Killeen, having moderated his tone, became the pioneer of the serious presentation of silent films on television.

Everson started the Theodore Huff Film Society with friends Huff, Seymour Stern and Herman Weinberg. When Huff died, he added the word "Memorial" – but by then he was running it on his own. It was a society that showed the rarest films – often in a double bill with a recognised classic. Everson's programme notes became

world-famous (and let us hope that some enterprising publisher will bring them out).

In 1959, MGM's *Ben-Hur* received rave reviews and Everson felt that they were not deserved – so he showed the 1925 version at the Huff. Rival collector Raymond Rohauer, experiencing a little trouble himself over a lawsuit from MGM, told the FBI what Everson was doing and they confronted him after the performance. They seized the print, and Everson spent the next few days squirrelling other hot titles around New York. Lillian Gish had to intervene on his behalf. In the 1970s, the FBI instituted a "witch hunt" among film collectors, but by then Everson was too highly respected to be touched.

Archives came to depend on him – he would not only loan rare prints for copying or showing, but he would travel the world presenting the films he loved. I was astounded to meet him at an airport weighed down by three times as many cans of films as any human could be expected to carry.

He had the uncanny knack of finding lost films. It would be no exaggeration to say that single-handedly, he transformed the attitude of American film enthusiasts towards early cinema. He was scornful of archives who let his favourite films rot – but it was curious how he always managed to sneak a beautiful 16mm print before its negative finally disappeared. His name appeared on scores of documentaries about cinema history (particularly those by David Gill and myself) because his advice was as essential as access to his collection. His books ranged from picturebooks like *The Films of Laurel and Hardy* (1967) to the amazingly detailed *American Silent Film* (1978).

And now it can be told. There is one book which has been consistently available for more than 30 years – *Classics of the Silent Screen* (1959) by Joe Franklin, the New York talk-

show host. Inside the cover is a minute credit: research assistant William K. Everson. You can tell that he really wrote the entire thing by the enthusiasm, the knowledge, and the frequent use of words emphasised in italics. No one else ever wrote quite like that.

He was a lucky man. He spent his life doing what he enjoyed most. But how few such people transform the lives of others? If his generosity will be sorely missed, at least he has made an indelible mark on the cultural history of his time.

He had been in a great deal of pain with his cancer – but he was a true stoic and he managed to teach two classes a week right up to the end of March. There will be no funeral, but a memorial service will be held at New York University.

I shall think of William K. Everson fondly as the young man who went without food to afford \$90 for a print of *Are Parents People?* – a 1925 comedy with Betty Bronson. He fell in love with the screen image of Miss Bronson, tracked her down to her home in Pasadena and a firm friendship developed. He brought her to the Museum of Modern Art to introduce her classic *Peter Pan* (1924). She decided she would like to act again – so Everson, through his contacts at Allied Artists, secured her a good supporting role in Sam Fuller's *The Naked Kiss* (1965) and this led to further work with Frank Capra, Disney and even a long-running television soap opera.

There are hundreds of other acts of kindness we will never know about. But the name of William Everson is now better known to film history than the director who inspired him to change it.

Kevin Brownlow

William Keith Everson, film historian, film collector. Film teacher: born 1901, Somerset 8 April 1929; married twice (one son, one daughter); died New York City 14 April 1996.



Wolf: 'I have a feeling I've listened to more talk in my life than any other single person'

Dan Wolf

Dan Wolf was one of the three founders of New York's *Village Voice* newspaper, and for many years its editor.

Set up in 1955, to rally against the existing press and to provide a voice for the young and radical for whom there was no means of expression, the paper came to reflect the cultural changes and political discontent that simmered beneath the Communist witch-hunts of the time, providing a seed-bed for young writers and extending an influence far beyond the borders of Greenwich Village.

In 1962 Wolf said that the *Village Voice* was created "when the vulgarities of McCarthyism had withered the possibilities of a true dialogue between people. The best minds in America – radical and conservative – were repeating themselves."

Often editorially chaotic, the paper came to support the civil rights and feminist movements, to oppose the war in Vietnam and to publish a blend of advocacy and personal journalism that could swing between articles on the Black Panthers or gay rights to erotic Christmas ornaments and psychedelic shopping centres.

Daniel Wolf was born on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and as a young man aspired to write novels, but during the Second World War he was drafted into the Army where he served in aerial intelligence in the Far East. After the war he studied psychology, and earned money writing articles on philosophy for the *Columbia Encyclopedia* and working for the Turkish embassy before establishing the *Village Voice*. His co-founders were Edwin Fancher, a psychologist he had met while registering at the New School for Social Research in 1946, and Norman Mailer.

Wolf was an attentive editor who encouraged young writers including, of course, Mailer. Many believed his talent lay in editing people, not copy and he was known as a good listener. "I have a feeling I've listened to more talk in my life than any other single person," he once said. By the late Sixties the *Village Voice* could claim around 150,000 readers and had become renowned for its unusual advertisements. "Veteran of three lunatic asylums wants to explore possibility of book with qualified writer," read one.

Wolf sold his interest in the paper in 1970 for \$3m and retired to enjoy the benefits of affluence. In 1977 he became an adviser-at-large to Mayor Edward Koch whom he had supported in his election campaigns through editorials in the *Voice* and with whom he shared a common dislike of the existing political organisation in New York. "I suppose that my role is to encourage him to be himself," Wolf said describing his role as a taskmaster who eased the Mayor through heated decision-making difficulties. "He knows that I am not there to gain points."

In later years Wolf remained Koch's editor and confidant after he left office. "I'm the only person in America I know who has his own editor and probably the best editor they have ever had on a newspaper," Koch once remarked.

Edward Helmore

Daniel Wolf, journalist: born New York 25 May 1915; co-founder and editor, *Village Voice* 1955-70; married 1956 Rhoda Lazare (one son and one daughter); died New York 11 April 1996.

Jane Wyndham-Kaye

For more than 20 years, Jane Wyndham-Kaye was the highly effective voice of the professional association for health visitors and an influential trade unionist.

Her appointment first as Assistant General Secretary to the Women Public Health Officers' Association in 1958, and then six years later to the top job of General Secretary at the Health Visitors' Association (as it had become) could hardly have been predicted from her early career.

Born in Hertfordshire in 1921, Jane Wyndham-Kaye left school to study the dramatic arts. The Second World War intervened and she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service, rising to the rank of junior commander. After the war, she ran a nursery and served as the only woman member of Hemel Hempstead Borough Council, and later as constituency agent. Those who knew her only later in her Health Visitors' Association persona were kept guessing as to which party she had supported then or subsequently. The job of General Secretary demanded, and got, a completely neutral party-political stance from its occupant.

In her thirties Jane Wyndham-Kaye studied law in her spare time, and was called to the Bar in 1958. She never practised, however. Within weeks she had responded to a Health Visitors' Association job advertisement. Twenty-one

years later, in an interview for the *Evening Mirror*, she recalled that her fate was sealed the minute she arrived for the selection panel: somehow, she knew that this was the work she was meant to do. She soon learned that the body she had joined was no ordinary little society of felt-hatted do-gooders. Founded in 1896 by a group of women sanitary inspectors, it became a trade union in 1918 and joined the Trades Union Congress in 1924, a unique position for a professional nursing organisation.

On entering office as General Secretary in 1964, Jane Wyndham-Kaye became, under Association rules, the sole non-health visitor member and, indeed, the only general secretary in recent times not to hold the professional qualification. This was, in the light of her sharp mind, legal training and political experience, hardly a handicap and possibly an advantage. What is certain is that, during her administration, the duality of professional and trade union roles flourished, the interests of each advancing substantially under her skilled and steady hand.

On both fronts, Wyndham-Kaye insisted upon the application of clear thinking, reasoned argument and avoidance of dogma; knowing and playing by the "rules of the game", and acknowledging always the political realities. This won her immense respect from nursing and midwifery leaders and her trades union colleagues, who could only admire her negotiating skills as, year after year in the Nurses and Midwives Whitley Council, she maintained health visiting's position at the top of the pay scale. Dame Catherine Hall, a former head of the Royal College of Nursing described her as a "doughty fighter for her members", but also as someone who could take an informed and intelligent independent position in resolving conflict between the different sectional interests.

Within the trade union movement, as member of the TUC Health Services and Local Government committees, and valued colleague and friend of many union leaders, her wise counsel was sought in and outside committee. Her ability and independence meant that she was understood and was trusted by both the professional organisations and the unions. During the dispute affecting the public and health services in 1979 and 1982, she played a significant, although informal, advisory and mediatory role.

As part of her mission to represent the profession, Jane Wyndham-Kaye lectured and travelled all over Britain to speak at Association meetings, where her presence would guarantee standing room only. Through example and by instruction, generations of health visitors and school nurses learned how to promote their professional, trades union and clients' interests in the corridors of power. The lesson was put to historic effect in the Association's successful lobby of Parliament in 1978, when the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Bill was amended to secure health visiting's continued separate identity as a profession.

After retirement, Wyndham-Kaye continued to serve the health service with distinction, first on North West Thames Regional Health Authority, and then as Chairman of South West Hertfordshire Health Authority 1986-90. Once again, her professionalism as chairman, an insistence that issues were debated on their merits and not on party lines, and consummate wit and charm, guided the health authority adroitly through some politically tricky waters.

Jane Wyndham-Kaye drew a clear line between her public and personal lives. However, those who knew her well were witnesses not only to the fortitude with which she bore the tragic loss of her son but also, more felicitously, to a warmth and generosity of spirit which inspired immense personal loyalty and admiration.

Shirley Goodwin

Jane Wyndham-Kaye, barrister: born Hemel Hempstead 1921; Assistant General Secretary, Health Visitors' Association 1958-64; General Secretary, Health Visitors' Association, 1964-84; OBE 1980; Member, NW Thames Regional Health Authority 1982-86; Chairman, SW Hertfordshire Health Authority 1986-90; married (one son deceased; marriage dissolved); died Oxford 5 April 1996.



Wyndham-Kaye: 'doughty fighter for her members' Photograph: Pam Isherwood / Format

BIRTHS

BUTCHINGS MICHALOPOULOS: On 6 April, to Sophia and Niko, a second son, Hector Nikolaos James.

DEATHS

TURNERS Norma (formerly Turner-Samuels, nee Verstone), died peacefully on Saturday 13 April 1996, aged 79. Lifetime journalist and peace activist, and dedicated volunteer with the London Lighthouse. Will be sadly missed by her loving family and many friends around the world. Service to be held at the London Lighthouse, W11 / Marie Curie Centre for Cancer Relief.

WESTON Aubrey, on Saturday 13 April, peacefully at home, beloved husband of Chloe and father of Julian. Service at 11.45am, Wednesday 17 April at Golden Green Crematorium (East Chapel). No flowers please, but donations to Crisis for the Homeless, 7 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DU.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number. The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

Birthdays

Queen Margrethe of Denmark, 56; Lord Abernethy, former president, John Brown & Co, 63; Vice Admiral Sir Peter Austin, 75; Miss Joan Bakerwell, broadcaster, 63; Lord Camoys, deputy chairman, Barclays de Zoete Wedd, 56; Sir John Harvey-Jones, former chairman, ICI, 72; Mr Vince Hill, singer, 64; Mr Michael Hirst, former chief constable, Leicestershire, 58; Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith MP, 72; Mr Richard Keshaw, broadcaster, 62; Miss Ruth Madoc, actress, 53; Mr Peter Marshall, chairman, Ocean Group, 69; Mr Spike Milligan, comedian and writer, 78; Mr Jimmy Osmond, singer, 33; Sir Geoffrey Owen, former editor, *Financial Times*, 62; Mr Frank Page, journalist and broadcaster, 66; Mr David Porter MP, 48; Mr Gerry Rafferty, singer and songwriter, 49; Mr James Ramsdell, Advocate General of the Army and

RAF, 60; Sir John Robson, former ambassador to Norway, 66; Miss Gabriella Sabatini, tennis player, 26; Miss Constance Shacklock, opera singer, 83; Mr Llewellyn Smith MP, 52; Miss Dusty Springfield, singer, 56; Dr William Stearn, consultant botanist, 85; Mr Leo Tindemans, statesman, 79; Professor Barbara Tizard, educationist, 70; Sir Peter Ustinov, actor and writer, 75.

Anniversaries

Births: Frans van Mieris the Elder, painter, 1635; Sir Hans Sloane, physician and naturalist, 1660; Charles Montagu, first Earl of Halifax, politician, poet and founder of the Bank of England, 1681; John Hadley, mathematician and inventor of the first reflecting telescope, 1682; Marie-Anne Elisabeth Vigée-Lacroix, painter, 1755; Ford Madox Brown, painter, 1821; Anatole France (Jacques-Anatole François

Thibault), novelist, 1844; Wilbur Wright, aviation pioneer, 1867; John Millington Synge, poet and playwright, 1871; Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, comedian, 1889; Henry (Enrico) Mancini, composer, 1924; Deaths: Marcus Salvius Otho, Roman emperor, committed suicide, 69; Aslma Beha, playwright and novelist, 1989; Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, painter, 1828; Marie (Greshniz) Tussaud, founder of Madame Tussaud's waxworks, 1830. On this day: Martin Luther arrived at the Diet of Worms, 1521; Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, was decisively defeated at Culloden by the Duke of Cumberland, 1746; the Island of Malta was awarded the George Cross by King George VI, 1942; the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (EEC) was set up, 1948. Today is the Feast Day of St Bernadette, St Contardo, St Drogo or Droon, St Encratius, St Fructuosus Braga, St Joseph Benedict

Labre, St Magnus of Orkney, St Optatus and the Martyrs of Saragossa, St Paternus or Pair of Avranches and St Turibius of Astorga.

Lectures

National Gallery: Stella Gambling, "April Showers (ii): Turner, Rain, Steam and Speed", 1pm.

British Museum: George Hart, "Sakkara: the step pyramid of Djoser", 1.15pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Imogen Stewart, "Early 17th-century Embroidered Dress", 2.30pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Tobia Mann, "The Bluestockings: 18th-century intellectual women", 1.10pm.

Stirling University (Logic Lecture Theatre): Dr David Quarmby, "Uses and Abuses of Mathematical Modelling in Retailing", 6.30pm.

Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, London N6: Fiona Mac-

Carthy, "William Morris: designing Utopia", 7.45pm.

Royal Over-Seas League

Mr George H. Webb, Member of Council, Gresham College, was guest speaker at a meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League's Discussion Circle held yesterday evening at Overseas House, London SW1. His subject was "The Significance and Role of the City Livery Companies".

Schools

King's School, Canterbury The Summer Term begins today at the King's School, Canterbury. Mozart's *Requiem* will be performed in the Cathedral on Saturday 11 May. King's Week will run from 27 June to 3 July. Speech Day is Thursday 4 July when the Anniversary Preachment will be by Dr Stephen Winkley, Headmaster of Uppingham School.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal attends a Silver Jubilee reception for the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association at Marlborough House, London SW1, for delegates attending a symposium at the University of Hertfordshire. A Princess Margaret visits John Storer House, a Voluntary Action Centre administered by Chazwood Community Council, in Loughborough, Leicestershire, and as Patron, attends a performance by the Scottish Ballet at the New Theatre, Phil. The Duke of Gloucester's President, Cancer Research Campaign, attends the opening of the Exhibition of Works by Jan Van Goyen at the Richard Green Gallery, London W1; and as President, British Consultants Bureau, attends a dinner at Brook's, London SW1. Princess Alexandra, Patron, the Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust, opens the Phase 1 Extension of the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow, Essex.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1 hour 15 minutes. Watch Church mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

Quality for all, as you're a MAN
The Association for the Advancement of Career Progression in the NHS. The BMA has been committed to a culture of excellence in the health service. The press release quotes the Chairman of the Career Progression in the NHS.

Imran vs Benazir

Sunday's bomb attack on his Lahore hospital could propel the cricketing playboy, cum Muslim visionary, into the ferocious world of Pakistani politics, says **Tim McGirk**



Imran Khan: a life

Handsome 6ft2 Oxford undergraduate made test debut aged just 18 (1971). Khan leaves Fribble College in 1975 as a blue, and with a third-class degree. Cricketer, descendant of proud Parthi warrior race hits women's hearts for six and bowls maidens over. As captain of the Pakistan team, Khan became a favourite British pin-up. He seemed amply to fulfil the role of tall dark stranger, mixed in the "right circles" and masterfully (some would say bossily) commanded his team to victory on the field. Fast-bowler Cossanova: Khan was a regular in London's nightclubs and gossip pages during the 1980s. He was "linked" with Stephenie Beachem, Goldie Hawn, Lady Lisa Campbell, Caroline Kelleff, Sarah Giles and Susanelli Constantine. Marriage was sometimes rumoured. His cricket improved all the while. Imran's 50-1 unknowns humiliate England: Khan led underdogs Pakistan to triumph over England in the Cricket World Cup Final in Melbourne (1992). He retired having played 88 Tests. Playboy of Eastern World swaps cricket whites for Pakistani national dress. After retiring from cricket in 1992, Khan's image underwent a transformation as he began to criticise Western culture. Commentators suggested he had political motives as he toured the country and raffish his Mercedes to help pay for a cancer hospital.

Ben Summers

Imran Khan is counting the cost of harbouring political ambitions; the sums are mounting rapidly. Over the weekend a bomb tore through his Lahore cancer hospital, killing six people and seriously wounding another 20. Khan's transformation from cricket star and thinking woman's crumpet into social reformer and political visionary was all going terribly smoothly until someone decided to make him a bomb target.

As founder of the Shaikat Memorial Trust Hospital in Lahore, Mr Khan had planned to give a wealthy Pakistani businessman - and possible donor - a tour of his hospital at about noon on Sunday. At the last minute, though, the meeting was called off.

Imran stayed home. The 11th device, hidden under a sofa in the waiting hall, exploded at 12:23 pm, just as Pakistan's most popular hero and his guest would have been making the rounds.

Mr Khan had spent years scraping together donations to build a charitable hospital in memory of his mother, who died of cancer. It was reckoned to be the finest medical facility of its kind in Pakistan. Most of the patients were poor, and they received free cancer treatment. But it was more than a hospital. It was also a symbol of his moral renewal as a Muslim, his ambitions as a reformer, an implicit criticism of the corruption of Pakistan's ruling elite and possibly the launch pad for his bid to unseat prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

She for her part is worried that the bomb may simply add to Imran's lustre by making him more of a hero and a martyr in the eyes of the people. When he was telephoned with news of the blast, Mr Khan raced out to the hospital, on the edge of Lahore, and began helping to move the injured into ambulances, which rushed them to hospitals equipped for casualties. Imran has cultivated an image of cool calmness, indicative of an inner centredness. Witnesses say he was "stunned and angry" as he wandered through the charred remains of his dream. The powerful bomb had destroyed the chemotherapy ward, the outpatient department and parts of the entrance, causing millions of pounds in damages.

"It's the work of a savage or an animal, because no human being can do such a thing to a hospital," said Mr Khan bitterly. Who planted the bomb? The cricket star had no doubt: the motive was political. The huntly spoken Mr Khan accuses both the government of Benazir Bhutto and the opposition leader, Nawaz Sharif, of incompetence and corruption.

"These people who feel threatened by me, the bombing was a clear message from them. I have been receiving verbal threats from some political quarters that I should desert from my plans," he explained angrily. Those warnings have been coming thick and fast. While Benazir has been publicly polite, her supporters have relished rubbishing Imran's political credentials and ambitions. Salman Iqbal, a member of Benazir's Pakistan People's Party, gave this assessment of Imran's prospects: "He does not understand the realities of politics. Politics in Pakistan is a nasty, slow, dangerous grind. I have been to jail 14 times; he has never seen the back end of a jail. If he could tell me the GDP of Pakistan I would jump through the window."

Bhutto's "sports adviser" and Khan's former Pakistan team-mate Sarfraz Nawaz said last year: "He's a cheater - that has been established. He calls himself a devout Muslim - if he is, he should be stoned to death for adultery. Imran has always been a money-minded person. He is cunning and selfish."

Imran is expected to launch a third political party later this week to challenge Ms Bhutto's PPP and Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League. Fed up with the pervasive corruption and the vengeful brawling of the two main parties, many Pakistanis are desperate enough to turn to a cricket star as their only hope. Both he and

his convert Muslim wife, Jemima - daughter of the British millionaire Sir James Goldsmith - were in London last week. But while Jemima was hatching with Princess Diana, Mr Khan was in Southall gathering funds for his hospital and canvassing for his anti-corruption drive.

Ms Bhutto is rattled. She has banned all fundraising advertisements for his hospital on the state-run Pakistan television. Her officials smear Mr Khan and his hospital whenever they can, insinuating that he and his relatives are embezzling donations.

Although both are offspring of the feudal aristocracy and attended Oxford University in the early 1970s, the cricket star is widely regarded as a class turncoat. He tries to portray himself as a champion of poor, devout Muslims and a foe of the western-educated "Brown Sahib" culture to which Ms Bhutto and most of the country's political elite belong.

The contest between the two is ferocious. Told of the bomb, Ms Bhutto broke off a visit to the frontier city of Peshawar and flew to Lahore to view the damage and offer condolences. As Najan Seth, a Lahore political commentator, said: "The last thing Benazir wanted was to make a martyr out of Imran. Everyone would turn against her."

Khan refused to tell her. "Her visit was meant to get political mileage out of the misery of people. It was a media stunt," he fumed. Privately, Ms Bhutto's aides allege that the cricketer may be an unwitting pawn in a plot by "disgruntled agencies" and "militant elements" trying to topple her government. At the outset, he relied on a right-wing Muslim youth organisation, the Pasban, for organising his hospital fund-raising rallies. Mr Khan has also been linked to General Hamid Gul, a former chief of Pakistani military intelligence with strong pan-Islamic views.

In Lahore, sources close to Ms Bhutto's government said that the inquiry into the bomb blast will focus on associates of Mr Khan's within the hospital organisation. This may turn out to be nothing more than a sloppy attempt to frame Mr Khan's colleagues in order to make him look like a well-meaning but rather thick-headed sports star, one who is incapable of running a hospital, let alone a country.

The grand Mogul city of Lahore seethes with

other conspiracy theories. One theory puts the blame on the opposition leader, Mr Sharif, who stands to gain from it since many Pakistanis, with or without proof, will jump to the conclusion that Ms Bhutto's henchmen were behind the blast. Mr Sharif in the past has tried to woo the cricket hero over to his party, and he may now try to convince Mr Khan that only by joining forces can they topple Ms Bhutto. When Mr Sharif, himself a keen but overweight cricketer, toured the blast site, he held Mr Khan's hand solicitously as they walked through the smouldering debris of the chemotherapy unit.

Another theory places Mr Khan in the centre of a plot by Muslim extremists (there are many within the Pakistani armed forces and intelligence) who set off the bomb to goad the cricketer - undoubtedly the most popular figure in Pakistan - into battling against Ms Bhutto. Advocates of this theory claim that the Muslim fundamentalists want to get rid of Ms Bhutto for being too pro-western, and that Mr Khan is needed to give their putsch plans a veneer of acceptability.

Imran Khan has lived a gilded life. As captain of Pakistan he led it to a famous win in the cricket World Cup against all odds. He has great wealth and has been the object of desire of hordes of well-heeled women. Even his marriage to Jemima Goldsmith has played well in Pakistan as further evidence of how he manages to get everything he wants. The bomb will give him pause to think before plunging into politics proper. Yet the blast may mark the moment when he steels himself to stand and fight. And if he does the contest will be ferocious.

Benazir Bhutto: a life

Born: 21 June, 1953. Found it politically necessary to have an arranged marriage. In 1987 she married Asif Zardari. During her pregnancies, fundamentalists said she should remain at home with her children. But her husband is her knight in shining armour. In her autobiography, *Daughter of the East*, she said, Zardari thought of her as a lady in distress. He soon discovered that "The lady's not so fragile." Greatest betrayal: The opposition from her mother and brother Mir. She feels this has damaged the political struggle in Pakistan. Her husband Asif Zardari is referred to as Mr Ten Per Cent: He was detained for over two years on charges, since abandoned, ranging from fraud to murder. Bhutto's father mapped out her life: Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who was executed in 1979, advised her on what to read and how to behave. She conversed at the dinner table with guests like Hubert Humphrey and Henry Kissinger. As president of the Oxford Union 1976 she drove a yellow MGB sports car: Bhutto wore Anna Belinda dresses and describes her years at Lady Margaret Hall as "the best years of my life." She had a number of British boyfriends. Sals on Fifth Avenue has her measurements: As a little girl, her clothes were bought from the New York store. Now her jeans have been replaced by traditional shalwar-khameez while a dupatta covers her head at all times.

Ramola Talwar

DIARY

Sky's the limit at Westminster

If you notice a sharp drop in the 7 pm voting record of your MP it may be because it coincides with the start of football coverage on TV. As of yesterday, television sets throughout Westminster - including those in MPs' private offices - will have Sky News, CNN International, Sky Sports and Sky Sports II to add to the routine coverage of Parliamentary debates.

Asked who was paying for the service, Sky says that it cannot comment on a commercial agreement. The service has been arranged by the House of Commons information committee, which would suggest that the footie coverage comes courtesy of the taxpayer. It would also suggest some embarrassment for MPs who have campaigned against Sky monopolising sports coverage.

Jack Cunningham (above), Labour's heritage spokesman, led the campaign for keeping key sporting fixtures on terrestrial television. However, he too will be having his personal satellite coverage. A spokesman in his office said yesterday: "Mr Cunningham is far too busy to discuss this. His views are a great deal too complicated for a diary story."

Equality for all, as long as you're a MAN

A press release arrives from the British Medical Association promoting equal opportunities in the NHS. The BMA report from its Career Progress of Doctors Committee emphasises that everyone in the health service "should be personally committed to a culture in which prejudice of any sort is unacceptable". The press release quotes exhortations to equality from Dr Liz Shore, chairman of the Career Progress

of Doctors Committee and Helen Fallon, chairman of the BMA's Medical Students Committee. Unusually, the press release contains an NB for editors in bold type. Is it some feminist homily? Actually it turns out to be a post-feminist homily. The word chairman, it stresses, is "the preferred title of each of these women".

Greater horsepower

There's nothing better to take your



Need a better horse for your...

mind off losing 40 horses than getting a good motor or three. Henry Cecil, the Newmarket trainer, who saw Sheikh Mohammed remove all his horses from the Cecil string last autumn, has secured a sponsorship deal for his yard with Saab, the Swedish car manufacturer. Stable sponsorship is a fast-growing trend, with all that TV exposure for paddock sheets, staff jackets, and sweat rugs (expect to see sweat rugs placed on even the coolest horses henceforth). The deal will be formally announced at a champagne breakfast at Newmarket tomorrow.

Cecil tells the *Sporting Life*: "I have been trying for more than a year... to tie up with either a fashion house or a top car firm. Natalie, my wife, may be having the new convertible. I'm also getting one of the range for my nanny to drive our son Jake around and even getting one for my mother-in-law."

I know the Swedes are family minded. But nanny and mother-in-law? They're in danger of giving sponsorship a good name.

Relief in a can

I have news that will come as a great relief to, I'm told, one in five of the population. Today is officially National Constipation Day. "It may not be the kind of thing people chat to each other about," Georgina Pinnington, one of the organisers, concedes. "We have had terrible difficulty getting any celebrities involved. No volunteers at all, as yet." So hard to imagine why. But there is one happy coincidence for the organisers to celebrate. Tesco have reduced their baked beans to 3p a can.

Projection of bad luck

The publicity launch for the new and last Dennis Potter television series was held, unusually, at the Institute for Contemporary Arts in London. The BBC and Channel 4 both decided not to use the Bafta building for superstitious reasons as Potter had failed to win recent Bafta awards. Superstitions can be unlucky. The ICA projector broke down three times.

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Eagle Eye

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Keeping the iron curtain drawn

Two events in two days underline how delicately poised East-West relations have become. Nato's Secretary-General, Javier Solana, has begun a tour of the eastern European countries, many of which want to join Nato. This is not a formality; it could have far-reaching political significance.

That is because of an event that will take place today: the close for nominations for the Russian presidential elections in June. As things stand, those elections are likely to be won by the Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov. The prospect of several eastern European states joining Nato is the kind of development Mr Zyuganov will use to inflame the resentful Russian nationalism that is at the core of his appeal. A spectre that we might have thought had been banished may re-emerge: a Europe divided into east and west, albeit with the line slightly to the east of the old one, closer to Russia.

Mr Solana will tell candidates for Nato membership that, in spite of Russian objections, they have a right to join as sovereign states, and that they should eventually do so in the interest of wider European stability and security. No country – including the Baltic States that abut directly onto Russia – is ruled out. The first wave – Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic – might accede to Nato before the end of the century.

These will be difficult promises to keep. There are three, related problems: the risk of alienating Russia; the risk of a new iron curtain forming; and the dilemma of what to do about the countries that might lie between an expanded Nato and newly isolationist Russia.

Nato was created as a shield against the

power of the Soviet Union. Russia will regard any Nato expansion eastwards as a hostile act. Although it may be in turmoil, Russia is still a mighty force. Its armed forces may no longer match those of Nato, yet it is still a nuclear superpower and it has more conventional military power than any other state.

Whatever Nato members feel about expansion, Russia will not regard it as benign without cast-iron guarantees that would reduce Nato's effectiveness as a military alliance. It might be possible to write in prohibitions on the movement of troops and equipment into east European countries. But unless it was possible to deploy forces into those countries if they were threatened or attacked, the Nato security guarantee would mean nothing.

So is there an alternative to Nato expansion? In a near-perfect world, European security and stability could be equally well served by the more prosperous east European states joining the European Union. Yet a prosperous member of the EU adjacent to a crime-ridden, anarchic or autocratic state could hardly feel secure without a security guarantee. That may be an argument for expanding the EU's role in security. Economic integration will depend on some form of security guarantee.

We are moving away from an era where two opposed, cohesive structures could provide the security structure for Europe. In future – to borrow a phrase from another European debate – we will need a security system based on variable geometry of overlapping bi-lateral and multi-lateral economic and security arrangements.

Privatising tax cuts

"Only little people pay tax." So said the American millionaire Leona Helmsley, as she defended herself, unsuccessfully, against tax evasion. Add to the little people most ordinary employees and companies with had accountants, and Leona is probably right. Avoiding tax – legal manoeuvring to cut the tax bill – has become a British pastime for individuals as well as companies.

When Labour's transport spokeswoman Clare Short enthused this weekend about the possibility of paying more tax herself, she not only deviated from the party line, she also misjudged the public mood. Although the 1980s passion for tax cuts may have ebbed, entreprising tax avoidance is as popular as Delia Smith recipes.

In the 1990s companies, and increasingly self-employed individuals, shrug their shoulders, grudgingly accept tax levels as they are and then do their very best to find their own way round them. Tax cutting has been privatised.

Yet this fashion for tax avoidance has serious political consequences. As economists and Treasury officials search for an explanation for the unexpected shortfall in government tax revenue last year, it appears that new business strategies for avoiding tax may be a major contributor. VAT avoidance is certainly growing among both big and small companies, perhaps because the rate has risen so much over the past 17 years. But City analysts suspect that companies have increased their efforts to avoid tax across the board. Although the economy is growing, and profits are swelling, companies remain

desperate to keep costs down. For responsible company executives, reducing their tax liabilities has become just another cost-cutting measure.

As for individuals, the rise of self-employment and temporary contracts combined with self-assessment means that more of them are in charge of their tax affairs and looking for ways of minimising what the state takes from them.

The consequences are troubling: governments find it harder to make future tax and spending plans, the tax burden on the little people increases and pre-election tax cuts are harder to forecast with certainty.

So what to do about it? The main problem is with highly sophisticated tax avoidance schemes run by multi-national companies. Closing loopholes and enforcing existing rules will help, but only a bit. It is proving increasingly difficult to police national frameworks of taxation in a world of multi-national companies and global capital flows.

Where companies engage in other kinds of immoral behaviour – polluting seas or mistreating workers – consumer disapproval is a potentially powerful corrective. But can you seriously imagine the British public boycotting a company that had avoided tax?

As long as we accept it is a sign of ingenuity to avoid paying tax, we must also pay the price. Only if we come to see paying tax as a duty or obligation – as many ordinary people do – will we make large-scale tax avoidance beyond the pale. What is needed is not just new rules but a new ethic of tax.



'Party member speaking without consultation, sir?'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Drug-running is not Gibraltar's fault

Sir: Your leading article (12 April) calling for tough action against Gibraltar for allowing the drug trade to flourish is a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Gibraltar is a small, remote territory with a population of only 25,000. It is not a major drug hub, and its role in the drug trade is minimal. The real problem is the exploitation of the poorer by the richer and to ensure proper protection for inhabitants of exchanged lands, all deals could be required to be approved by, say, a United Nations tribunal.

Land-hungry Japan could seek to purchase all or part of Sakhalin and the Kuriles and give the economy of the land-rich Russian Federation a boost with some hard currency. Taiwan could formally acquire independence from mainland China with a cash sum. Boers wanting an Afrikaaner homeland (after all, they have been in the Cape since 1652) could satisfactorily buy one. If Israel relinquished some of its occupied territories, it might reasonably try to acquire some new lands, perhaps from Jordan or Egypt.

There is another way to sort out territorial squabbles. If individuals want some land and they can afford it, they buy it. Why shouldn't countries do the same? Much of the territory of the USA, including Alaska, was bought, rather than fought for. This way, countries needing land could deal with others needing cash or resources. To prevent

the activities of smugglers – except in the negative sense that such activities damage the territory's reputation and undermine business confidence. By exaggerating these activities you only exacerbate that damage.

WILLIAM E QUANTRELL
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire
The writer was Deputy Governor of Gibraltar, 1983-1990

Sir: There is a way to deal with the problem of Gibraltar. Britain could swap Gibraltar for the Spanish territories in north Africa, Ceuta and Melilla. Britain could then keep one of them as a freeport and military base and give the other back to Morocco. All three countries would benefit.

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TREVOR LYONS
Senior Lecturer in Law
Staffordshire University
Stoke-on-Trent

Jobs: Labour sets out strategy

Sir: John Philpott's analysis (9 April) of the policy options for reducing unemployment is balanced, but too unambitious. He claims that "even a controlled demand expansion would at best hit inflationary pressures at around 1.75m unemployed (6 per cent of the workforce)". But why do he and others believe that Nairu (the non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment) now operates at this level? Recent experience suggests this is too pessimistic.

It is true that when unemployment in the last economic cycle fell to 1.8m, inflation began to mount in 1989-90. But this was almost entirely due to a huge credit boom spinning out of control following the deregulation of financial markets in the early 1980s, plus the Lawson giveaway budget of 1988, which threw further oil on the fire.

What is needed now is a return to balance to overcome the "pendulum effect" of past policies, from exclusive emphasis on demand management in the 1960-70s to an almost equally exclusive concentration on the supply side in the 1980-90s. We

need a reconciliation of what should be mutually complementary policies. The supply side, especially training and labour mobility, is very important, but cannot by itself deliver the necessary number of job opportunities (when there are today about 700,000 vacancies, but probably around 3 million unemployed). Only some limited expansion of the demand side, in conjunction with appropriate supply-side measures, would be capable of having sufficient impact on the scale of unemployment today.

In carrying this through, I agree with Dr Philpott that our priority should be the 750,000 currently unemployed for more than a year. Whether extra jobs are created by higher investment or tax cuts, or where labour recruitment subsidies are provided for employers, the very high level of long-term unemployment is a disgrace we should no longer tolerate.

MICHAEL MEACHER MP
(Oldham W, Lab)
Shadow Employment Secretary
House of Commons
London SW1

Powers of water regulator

Sir: Your leader "Byatt gets a second chance" (3 April) shows some misunderstanding of the powers of regulators.

You express surprise that regulator did not intervene to redirect to customers some of the cash savings arising from the North West/Norweb merger. It is only in relation to mergers between water companies that lower bills for customers can result as a condition for the clearance of the merger.

This is due to the provisions in the Water Industry Act. Stephen Littlechild has no such power under the Electricity Act for mergers between electricity companies and neither of us can extract up-front savings in the case of inter-utility mergers.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Ofwat has, however, argued that companies should share benefits, especially unexpected ones, with customers at an early stage. But I have no powers to demand this. To do so could damage incentives to efficiency. At the next Periodic Review I will, however, ensure that customers benefit from any cost savings.

As you say, the ring-fencing provisions will protect customers from cross-subsidisation. Other licence amendments I have put in place will give me the access needed to discover exactly what cost savings are being made and to ensure that customers receive their fair share of these.

I C R BYATT
Ofwat
Birmingham

Ostrich farming is dangerous

Sir: Recent publicity over ostrich farming has highlighted the fact that investors cannot afford to put their heads in the sand.

Ostriches are exotic and essentially wild birds. They are not only dangerous, requiring licensing under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, but are easily frightened and potentially difficult to handle. They are adapted for life wandering the wide open plains of Africa rather than paddocks in lowland Britain.

If this fledgling industry takes off, it raises the possibility of ostriches being farmed intensively and transported over long distances. The American Ostrich

Association regards the transport of ostriches as "dangerous and stressful for both man and beast".

The ostrich farming industry has so far failed to come up with an answer to exactly how and where ostriches will be slaughtered humanely in Britain. The only EU-approved slaughterhouse for ostriches is in northern France. Urgent action is needed to halt the farming of these wild birds in Britain before the ostriches are forced to pay the price in suffering.

PHILIP LYMBERY
Campaigns Director
Compassion in World Farming
Petersfield, Hampshire

The pulpit and the hustings

Sir: We are told by Tim Montgomerie of the Conservative Christian Fellowship that "believers would bring a sense of honesty and probity" to politics (Letters, 10 April), and by Charles Brock of Mansfield College that without religion in politics "we are faced with a moral vacuum and political vacuousness" (Letters, 12 April).

This is mere rhetoric. There is no evidence that believers are morally superior to unbelievers in politics any more than anywhere else. The repeated claims for

political sanctity by Christian propagandists ignore the long succession of such people as Thomas Paine and Robert Owen, G J Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh, John Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell, William Morris and Robert Blatchford, Ramsay MacDonald and Harry Snell, Harold Laski and G D H Cole, Aneurin Bevan and Hugh Gaitskell, Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock, in this country alone.

NICOLAS WALTER
Rationalist Press Association
London N1

Brando's ordeal

Sir: The attack on Marlon Brando for speaking his mind, by the Hollywood Jewish hierarchy, smacks of nothing so much as McCarthyism. We had the branding, the threats, the arraignment, the "confession" and the abject apology, complete with (cars (report, 13 April), and the return to the fold. This episode will leave a bad feeling in the minds of all liberal-minded people, Jews and non-Jews alike.

W K HARPER
Stoke-on-Trent

Dragged in

Sir: Your piece (Diary, 4 April) about Chevalier d'Eon and his transvestism was amusing, but I have to take seriously the putting of words into the mouth of Sigmund Freud. "Eonism" was coined by Henry Havelock Ellis, who considered it simpler than "transvestism". As a matter of fact, Freud wrote nothing on this subject.

TOM ROBERTS
Archivist
Sigmund Freud Copyrights
Colchester

Orwellian equality at the Bar

Sir: The letter from Peter Goldsmith QC (15 April) prompts me to suggest that the independence of a barrister is established when he or she is called to the Bar, and is not altered by the manner in which he or she then earns a living.

The general Council of the Bar cannot make the Orwellian claim that all barristers are independent but some barristers are more independent than others.

LEO HAYNES
Northwood, Middlesex

Stop motoring through villages

Sir: I read with dismay Nicholas Gregory's letter (12 April), in which he urged motorists to leave the motorways and rediscover the joys of the B-roads.

While Mr Gregory and his like may enjoy trundling along the B-roads – or, as is frequently the case, tearing along the B-roads – residents of those towns and villages he polutes with his fumes and noise would not share this view. Ambling through the countryside without a good purpose might have been fine once six cars a day disturbed a village, but those days are long gone.

LYNNE CURRY
Clevedon,
Somerset

Birds vs salmon

Sir: The chairman of the Westex Salmon Association (letter 13 April) claims that salmon stocks have been reared at great expense by conservationists. Surely they could be protected from depredation if these same conservationists banned salmon fishing for a few years; or are these a different species of conservationists from those concerned with kormorants?

FRED KAY
Northampton

Irish censors

Sir: Could you please put an end to the nonsense still being promulgated by William Harrison (Obituaries, April 13) about the Catholic Church in Ireland banning books? The Irish Censorship of Publications Board is a statutorily established state board, as is the Censorship of Publications Appeals Board.

MAURICE A O'SULLIVAN
Bray,
Co Wicklow

Reformists

Sir: Why is it that every change made by the Government, such as to health, education or the penal system, is called a reform. Are they all improvements?

TANIA ENGLAND
Bristol

Make hay while the sun shines in Albania

Today I am bringing you more jewels from that great ongoing work, *The Book of Albanian Proverbs*. Albanian proverbs are different from ordinary proverbs. Ordinary proverbs sound at first sight as if they are full of wisdom and insight, but generally turn out to be humdrum and banal, whereas Albanian proverbs, which sound a bit scatter-brained at first encounter, turn out on closer inspection to be profoundly meaningful. I, personally, much prefer them. Anyway, here is another selection of Albanian wit and wisdom.

We grow hair on many different parts of our body, but we only complain of baldness on top of our head.

Breathing is not addictive, but it would be fatal to give it up.

A weather forecast paints a wider canvas than any novel but it is bad art on two counts. First, it tells posterity nothing. Second, it is untrue even on the day when it is made.

"I do not write for posterity," said the author, before making his will.

In the old days, a "mobile" was an art object hanging from the ceiling and going round in circles. Nowadays it is



MILES KINGSTON

used to refer to a mobile telephone. So what is a mobile now called – or is it no longer possible to make them because they no longer have a name?

Would a telephone hung from the ceiling of an art gallery be a mobile? And if you hung a telephone and labelled it a "mobile", and it then rang, would it be artistic to answer it, or would it be a mistake for which you would be laughed at by your fellow artists?

Real flowers do not last as long as artificial flowers made out of paper or cloth, but at least you never have to dust real flowers.

Lucky the patient who is looked after by a hypochondriac doctor.

Ice-lollipops are always fruit-flavoured. Nobody is ever brave enough to make a tomato ice-lolly.

Even the worst painter can sketch his own likeness, but it is impossible for even the greatest composer to do a self-portrait.

The opposite of a thank-you letter is not a begging letter.

A bicycle mudguard could never be invented by a bicycle, as it makes the bike far muddier than it need be, and only guards the rider.

The letter that comes first in a sentence is rewarded by being made a capital, but the equally important letter that comes last in a sentence is only kicked up the backside by a full stop.

When cows cross a busy and dangerous main road for milking, it is the farm hands who wear safety orange jackets, not the cows.

If you like the wrapping paper, but not the present which it contains, at least write a thank-you letter for the paper.

Many a man who thinks he is talking about education is merely discussing his country's school system.

Many a man who thinks he is talking about religion is merely talking about his church.

Many a man who think he is talking about politics is only talking about the next election.

Many blacks in America prefer to be called Afro-Americans, but not many whites demand to be called Euro-Americans.

You are what you eat. This can be proved by the fact that, when the waiter comes to your table and says, "OK, who's the lamb chop?", you say, "I am".

In the city, the top shelf in a newsagent's has sexy magazines. In the country it has motor bike and gun magazines.

When people try to baffle you by asking whether Chinese crosswords go from left to right or right to left, answer firmly: "Neither! All Chinese words are one character long! Therefore it is impossible to have a Chinese crossword!" This explains why Chinese commuters on the train are always staring into space. They have no crossword to do and only speeches to read.

If the United States had a patron saint, he would have been assassinated by now.

Handwritten signature: Miles Kingston

Culloden without the bloodshed

A Scottish parliament could spell disaster unless Labour fights for electoral reform at Westminster

Things happen in Scotland that change England, too. It was 250 years ago today that at Culloden Moor the Jacobite challenge to Hanoverian Britain was finally crushed. The slaughter of Prince Charles's army began the destruction of Gaelic Scotland. But had things gone the other way — had the clans charged earlier, had the wind been in another direction, had Butcher Cumberland's infantry been worse trained — Britain today would have been a different country.

How different? That's an exercise in anti-history, a game for clever, idling minds. Yet our ruling institutions, our political parties, our established churches would surely all have been affected. There would have been other disasters and unknown triumphs — a world in which Trafalgar didn't happen but Queen Veronica the Wicked did. Perhaps we would have been not one different country, but several. At any rate, a quarter-millennium on, Scottish affairs are again likely to loom large for the English future.

The reasons are less violent, but quietly dramatic enough in their way. The resurgence of nationalist sentiment in Scotland and the likelihood of a Labour-sponsored Edinburgh Parliament, which may be up and running by 1999, raise serious questions for the future of the British Union.

In a timely book published today, *The State and the Nations*, the Labour-leaning think-tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), addresses many of those questions. Though it deals with Wales and English regional government too, the book focuses clearly on Scotland. And rightly so, for on the answers given to the Scottish questions, much depends

— a new decade of nationalist breakup, or a political reform more dramatic than London yet realises.

The best-known of these questions remains Tam Dalyell's "West Lothian Question" — why should Scottish MPs at Westminster be able to vote on English education, health and so on, when English MPs have lost their powers to vote on similar Scottish questions? But Old Tam travels with two companions. Per capita, public spending in Scotland is higher than in England, and Scotland is also over-represented in MPs by about 20 per cent; and English Conservatives are angry about both.

Could all three aspects of Scotland's treatment under the current Union be sustained after the establishment of a Scottish Parliament? Increasingly nationalist English Tory MPs insist not; Labour doggedly says they can.

Here are the makings of an almighty bust-up. Short of turning the UK into a federation, the West Lothian question is unsolvable. The only half-way-house answer would be to take away Scottish MPs' right to vote on England-only legislation.

But that would remove the notion of a Commons government majority. You could have a Labour Prime Minister, with Scottish MPs, to command secure majorities on, say, foreign affairs, defence and UK taxation, but impotent on English legislation. As the IPPR authors point out, "The prospect of a Blair government in charge of taxation and public spending and a Portillo-led Conservative Opposition gaining control of the NHS and education budgets in England could not possibly be a recipe for stable government."

What, then, of the over-representa-



ANDREW MARR

Scotland gets more than her fair share of identifiable spending

tion of Scottish MPs? Labour is loath to even discuss this because it expects to depend for any future Westminster majority on Scots. Strict proportionality would require cutting the present 72 Scottish seats to 58; 10 of the 14 seats lost would be Labour ones. This might damage the Union as well as Labour, but there are senior English Labour politicians who privately think it just and inevitable.

Then there is the trickiest matter of all — finance. Ministers have been attacking the Scottish Parliament's proposed right to vary income tax by up to 3p in the pound as "Labour's tartan tax". But under the current formula, agreed in 1978, Scotland gets more than her share of clearly identifiable spending: the IPPR suggests that whatever happens to Scottish Home Rule, this is bound to be revisited and "Scotland is likely to face a period of tight spending constraints".

Here is another issue that has the potential for driving the two countries

apart. But fully reopening the so-called "needs assessment" would now require the investigation of other public spending ignored in the Seventies, and would inevitably raise questions about the huge defence and administrative subsidies to the English south-east and to Northern Ireland. That has been enough to make Tories under Thatcher and Major back off.

How, finally, would the inevitable arguments between Edinburgh and Westminster about their relative roles be dealt with? Through a Scottish Secretary in the Cabinet? Wouldn't that be a recipe for torn loyalties and vicious competition with the new Scottish Prime Minister. More thought is needed, and Labour is finalising plans for the judicial committee of the Privy Council in take on what will be, in effect, a sort of Supreme Court role for Anglo-Scottish disputes.

That sounds fair enough. But if the other answers were all as given above — no change at Westminster, nor in the distribution of seats, nor of money — it is not hard to see how competing Scottish and English nationalisms could emerge in the last years of the century. English Tories would be outraged, and would have found a cause to unite them. Scottish Nationalists, fighting their first Edinburgh election in a Labour government's mid-term year, would be well-placed for ferocious defiance.

But there is another way. Labour is already committed to a voting system for the Scottish parliament which, being proportional, gives the Scottish Tories their best hope of revival north of the Border. If Blair threw his leadership behind voting reform for Westminster, too, then some interesting conse-

quences would follow for the Union.

First, as the IPPR notes, the disparity between Scottish and English representation would be cancelled at a stroke. Second, Scottish Tories, fairly represented in a tax-raising legislature in Edinburgh, would be balanced by a revival of Labour in the English south. This would take a lot of the sting out of the West Lothian question, since it would less likely that Scottish MPs at Westminster would tilt English politics; their party-political mix would be nearer the national one.

And third, the first-past-the-post caricature of Britain which makes Scotland and the north red and the south blue, would be smeared away. The image of Scotland as composed of solid masses of barrack-like housing full of unemployed but inspirational socialists, and of the English south as a vast traffic-jam of headscarf-swathed Tory ladies in Range Rovers would vanish.

So Scotland would look more plural, and England less Conservative, and that would do a lot to take the sting away. Getting there requires a leap of Labour imagination. But not leaping may well mean that Labour, as a Unionist party, eventually breaks up the Union.

Political reform doesn't happen by blueprints or grand plans. It happens because one specific reform, demanded by hard political pressures, provokes the urgent need for another. In this case the electoral pressures on Labour for an Edinburgh parliament may yet provoke electoral reform throughout Britain. That's quite a thought. It would make Scottish Home Rule almost as dramatic a political event in English politics as Culloden was. And a much less bloody one.

A safe haven in the West

The desire among Eastern and Central European countries for EU integration will stalk the IGC, says Paul Latawski

This week the Secretary-General of Nato, Javier Solana, is touring the nations of Central and Eastern Europe to discuss the terms on which they will be invited to join Nato. But even as their leaders consider joining a defensive alliance to protect themselves from coming under Russian military domination again, they will be paying equal attention to their desire to join the European Union: for they see this avenue, too, as a means to prevent war and maintain peace.

When the countries of Central and Eastern Europe emerged from 40 years of Soviet-imposed limited sovereignty, one might have expected that their external policies would reflect the kind of prickly and insular independence usually associated with British Eurosceptics. The opposite has occurred. These countries have keenly sought to limit their sovereignty by applying to join such supranational organisations as Nato and the EU. The reason for this enthusiasm is not the prospect of Europe joining in their pockets, but the security conferred by integration.

Intellectually and politically, the elites of former Communist states are today closer to the founding fathers of the then European Community than to the present-day western European architects of the 21st century's *grande Europe*. The countries in the eastern half of the Continent are undergirding a fundamental political, economic and social reconstruction on the ruins of a totalitarian occupation — a situation not unlike that experienced by western Europe in the late Forties and early Fifties. Although western Europeans were politically able to seize the chance to integrate in the post-war era — making war unthinkable among them — in the Communist east, any ideas about European integration went into the ideological deep-freeze or stayed in exile.

It should be remembered that during the Second World War, Central and Eastern Europe produced its own visionaries of European integration. Dreams of a "federal Europe" were not a monopoly of western Europeans. Edvard Benes, the leader of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile envisaged in 1941 a series of federations emerging out of the rubble of world war. And the Polish political writer and journalist Kazimierz Smolowski founded a review in London called *Free Europe* whose editorial line promoted the view that "some kind of

regional federation in Europe must come". Underpinning these efforts was the same desire as their western European counterparts to avoid another war. Today's champions of integration, however, find more inspiration from Brezhnev than Hitler. After 1989, freed from the yoke of Soviet Communism, "return to Europe" became the political battle-cry, and membership in the EU one of the targets of the post-Communist bravehearts.

To be sure, support for EU membership is uneven in the region. The Poles and Romanians are keenest to join, while a quarter of the population in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and

Dreams of a 'federal Europe' were not a monopoly of western Europeans

Hungary opposes membership.

The return of former Communists to power has not transformed the drive for EU membership in Hungary and Poland. But where former Communists never left power, as in Bulgaria and Romania, the integration priorities are mixed. Romania follows the Polish pattern, pursuing membership in all-western institutions as an important national interest. In Bulgaria, however, second thoughts about joining Nato have given efforts to join the EU a higher profile. Indeed, in security terms, Bulgaria seems to see the EU as more politically advantageous, with regard to Russian sensibilities, than membership of Nato.

This back-to-basics approach of the Central and Eastern European countries to integration has immediate implications for the Inter-Governmental Conference, which opened at Turin last month. For although EU enlargement is not officially at the centre of the conference agenda, it stalks every discussion on institutional change, from a common currency to trade policy.

Central and Eastern European thinking haunts the IGC like the ghost of integration past. It reminds the present-day Euro-sceptics of how, when it comes to European integration, they have come to understand the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

The writer is an associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies.

It's a game of two minds

Golf is the only sport where compassion can combine with a killer instinct, writes Jim White

Golf is a game invented solely to torture its participants; a game, according to Alistair Cooke, that could only have been dreamt up by Calvinists, whose outlook on life was to ensure any moment of pleasure was balanced by one of unbearable pain. On Sunday night, the cruellest sport claimed another victim: Greg Norman.

Apparently on his way to victory in the US Masters, playing for three days with a brilliance that suggested he was destined to trounce the kind of cheque normally associated with the National Lottery, Norman crumbled. In the final round, the genius departed him, left him sapped and dissipated, as, cruising up behind him, filling his rear-view mirror, came the figure of the relentless Nick Faldo. The moment he sensed Faldo was upon him was the moment Norman lost it, the moment the Great White Shark beached himself, throwing away an unassailable lead. It was a pitiful sight.

Afterwards, thankful it was over, Norman said he would cherish all his career what Faldo said to console him at the end. No, he wouldn't reveal the words Faldo used, but they would live with him forever. Golfers share a camaraderie unusual in professional sport; they are always quick to sympathise with each other because they have all experienced the game's cruelty. In a sense, they are not rivals at all but colleagues united in an effort to overcome the common enemy: par.

You could tell that by his body language, by the way in which there was no triumphant punching of the air as he sank important putts, by the restrained and dignified manner he behaved at the end, that Nick Faldo was affected by Greg Norman's discomfort. He knew the man was suffering, knew how he felt. His sympathy, however, did not preclude him from taking advantage of his opponent's demise. And, on the 18th green, as he prepared the very consoling words he would say to Norman, Faldo was completing his rival's destruction.



Lost cause: Chris Waddle after missing his penalty in the 1990 World Cup semi-final

According to Dr Richard Cox, a sports psychologist who specialises in preparing golfers for the perils of their calling, the player who has the mental discipline to win is the one who is able to shut out all feeling for his opponent, even better if he can pretend his opponent does not exist at all.

"If you think about it, Faldo could have done what he did on Sunday without anyone else being there," says Dr Cox. "Golf is unique as a sport in that what your opponent does has no bearing on what you do. I advise players to go out and beat the course. Gary Player said he often didn't know his opponent's score, never mind his opponent's. That is the ideal state of mind for a golfer."

Dr Cox suggests to his players a long and detailed pre-shot routine, a practical preparation course that both improves their own approach and which deliberately leaves them with no cognitive capacity left to worry about their opponent. A cunning strategy but one that only a few are capable of adapting.

entirely in the mind." The purpose of sport is to be victorious, its role is to satisfy the primitive urge to prove your self-worth by triumphing

erately leaves them with no cognitive capacity left to worry about their opponent. A cunning strategy but one that only a few are capable of adapting.

You could tell by his body language that Faldo was affected by Norman's discomfort

And by no coincidence, they tend to be winners.

"The fascinating thing about golf," says Stephen Bull, author of *The Mental Game Plan: Getting Psyched For Sport*, "is that in a four-hour round, a player will only come into contact with the ball for five minutes. The rest of the time will be spent thinking about his shots. It is a game played almost

over your peers. Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, claims that the rush of victory in the last few minutes of a match his side is winning is more addictive than any drug and is the thing he lives for. Indeed, that is sport's great attraction, it is probably the only area left in a life of increasing compromise that operates with such fundamental clarity:

you win or you lose. But Ferguson is not gloating in his opponent's misery. Indeed, there are few sports in which the aim is to take sadistic pleasure in inflicting defeat, few sportsmen who would agree with Bobby Fischer, the former world chess champion, who once said that the most enjoyable moment of his game was when he crushed the other guy's ego. It is victory that counts, not enjoying the other guy's defeat.

Yet without defeat, there is no victory. So the mind must be steeled. Before they step into the ring, boxers, for instance, have to convince themselves the other man is their enemy. And once inside it, they must seize on every mistake, exploit every weakness, in order to achieve triumph that can only come through the ultimate humiliation of their rival. There is no room for sympathy in a

ring. But it is rare for a fighter to enjoy the demolition of an opponent, rather the two men, after seeking to kill each other over a dozen rounds, will usually embrace at the end of a bout with a solidarity that only comes from a mutual understanding of the enormity of the task in hand.

It probably helps to rid the mind of sympathy when a rival has just smashed you on the bridge of the nose. Less physical sports thus require, in their preparation, a degree of mental demoralisation of the opponent, to harden the resolve against compassion. In football, the language of war is often appropriated — "going over the top", "midfield general", "the kind of guy you want next to you in the trenches" — to focus on the challenge ahead. And the successful manager to take that kind of mindset on to the field with them. Thus in the penalty shoot-out at the end of the semi-final of the 1990 World Cup, the German players reserved their consolations for Chris Waddle and Stuart Pearce's hurt at their cataclysmic misses until after they had buried their own kicks. And Stephen Hendry, who has made it known that he only became a snooker player thanks to the inspiration of Jimmy White, nevertheless has taken full advantage of his hero's distress to win the world title on almost an annual basis.

"World champions are world champions because they are able to be completely absorbed in their own performances, whatever is going on around them," says Stephen Bull. "Don't underestimate one thing, though: how much they enjoy winning."

At all costs, apparently. It was once revealed in an interview that Ian Botham often played cricket in the garden with his son, Liam, when the lad was about six. So, asked the interviewer, did he let the boy win, as most of us would do, to spare the lad's feelings? "No," said Botham, as if he didn't understand the question. "Why should I?"

As people will always want verification of what they read from doctors and nurses they know, the code of conduct should allow 24 hours for information to reach the professionals. And those who will be consulted in surgeries and clinics must be provided with written materials to explain the issues. In this way it should be possible to inform the public of things they have a right to know without creating greater risks through avoidable panic.

The writer is Director of the Health Services Research Unit at the University of Oxford.

The public must be kept informed without being panicked, says Sarah Stewart-Brown

The risks of telling all

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service has reported carrying out an extra 800 abortions in the wake of the Pill scare in October of last year, when the Committee on Safety of Medicines announced that women taking third-generation contraceptive pills had double the risk of thromboembolic disease. NHS health authorities have also reported increases in abortions, with Bristol, where a survey showed that 12 per cent of women stopped taking the Pill immediately, reporting a 100 per cent rise. Maternity units around the country are anticipating an increase in births in the summer months.

These statistics were predictable because previous Pill scares have been followed by the same problems.

Research in Holland following the 1977 Pill scare showed a 22 per cent increase in the termination rate and a 6 per cent increase in births. In that country it took five years for the use of contraceptives and the abortion rate to return to the pre-scare rate.

The safety committee announced that women taking the third-generation pills had a rate of 1.5 cases of thromboembolism per 10,000 women years and less than two deaths per 100,000 women years. These rates are twice those of women taking the older pills, but they are also half

those among pregnant women. So women who stopped taking the Pill and got pregnant increased rather than decreased their risk of the problem they were trying to avoid, as well as creating many other problems for themselves.

Surely there must be a better way of dealing with the problem of communicating the findings of scientific studies to the public? We know that the public has difficulty relating to the concept of risk and is easily scared into making irrational decisions by media announcements. We know that the

press are hungry for good stories and tend to sensationalise news.

What is required is a code of conduct for the professionals and the media to prevent further events of this kind. The concept of risk is difficult but not impossible to grasp. It should be possible for people who are expert at communicating to work out how to communicate the results of scientific studies in a way that does not invite people to do things that are likely to cause them harm. For example, a hotline could be set up that would appraise journalists of comparative

risks and help them to assess the public health consequences of different ways of reporting findings that they have come across.

As people will always want verification of what they read from doctors and nurses they know, the code of conduct should allow 24 hours for information to reach the professionals. And those who will be consulted in surgeries and clinics must be provided with written materials to explain the issues. In this way it should be possible to inform the public of things they have a right to know without creating greater risks through avoidable panic.

The writer is Director of the Health Services Research Unit at the University of Oxford.

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Flat factory gate prices boost Footsie to record

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Share prices closed at a record high yesterday, largely due to a lower-than-expected increase in factory gate prices in March. The FT-SE 100 index advanced 23.7 points to 3,790.5, topping the previous closing record of 3,781.3 set in early February.

The pace of increase in prices charged at the factory gate faded last month to its lowest for just over a year.

Analysts said, however, that the favourable inflationary outlook was not enough in itself to guarantee a further reduction in interest rates.

Scope for a fourth reduction in base rates since December was made less likely by more signs yesterday of a pick-up in the economy.

As well as upbeat surveys from retailers and estate agents, official figures due to be released before the next monetary meeting between Chancellor

Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, on 8 May will be decisive. These include the unemployment count tomorrow, retail sales next week and the initial estimate of first-quarter GDP.

"Lower inflation is unlikely to be enough to trigger a further cut given signs that real activity is picking up," Michael Saunders, an economist at City investment bank Salomon Brothers, said.

Manufacturers raised prices by a modest 0.2 per cent in March, bringing the annual rate of increase down to 3.4 per cent from 3.7 per cent. "Core" prices, excluding food and energy products, were flat.

The sharpest slowdown in factory gate prices is occurring in industries which saw the fastest increases last year, including pulp and paper, chemicals, rubber and plastics.

Prices charged for food climbed 1.2 per cent last month.

A decline of 0.9 per cent in beef prices, concentrated towards the end of the month, was offset by a jump of 3.6 per cent in other meat prices.

A surge in food and oil prices took the prices paid by manufacturers for materials up 0.5 per cent in March. The year-on-year rate of increase remained unchanged at 2.8 per cent, the lowest for more than a year and a half. Of this 12-month rise, four-fifths was due to increased oil and food costs.

Despite the disappointing rise in materials prices last month due to these commodities, most City economists remain very optimistic about the trend in inflation.

A sharp fall in the best indicator of short-term trends, the annualised three-month rates of "core" factory gate inflation, from 1.7 per cent to 1.0 per cent pointed to further declines in the headline figures.

"As the year progresses, the easing in producer price inflation should begin to be reflected in an improvement in underlying retail price inflation," David Walton of Goldman Sachs said. Retail prices usually follow factory gate prices with a lag of about six months.

Few analysts think higher oil and food prices will last, as they reflect temporary disruptions to supply and low levels of oil stocks after the harsh winter. The futures market is already pointing to lower oil prices by the summer.

Airbus looks at £500m 747 rival

MICHAEL HARRISON

The European aircraft manufacturer Airbus is studying plans for the £500m (£500m) development of a new version of its A340 long-haul jet to compete with smaller versions of the Boeing 747 jumbo jet.

The stretched A340 would carry 375 passengers - 80 more than maximum now - have a range of 7,000 miles and enter service around the turn of the century.

Under an agreement announced yesterday General Electric of the US and Airbus are forming a joint team to study a new engine for the aircraft.

The current A340 range can carry between 260 and 295 passengers on "long thin routes" typically between second cities on different continents.

The new aircraft, known as the A340-600 would extend that capacity enabling Airbus to compete on routes such as London to Los Angeles.

An Airbus spokesman described the study as part of a pincer movement against Boeing with the A340-600 competing at the bottom end of the 747 market and its planned super-jumbo, the A3XX, attacking the 500-seater plus market.

Analysts believe the new A340 could cost between \$500m and \$1bn to develop since Airbus would need to extend the fuselage of the existing aircraft and carry out some modification to the wings. These are built by British Aerospace which has a 20 per cent stake in the consortium.

The Airbus A330-A340 family presently competes with the Boeing 777 range which was launched last year with United Airlines and British Airways as launch customers.

The 777-200 series can carry 305 passengers in 3-class or 375 in 2-class configuration and its range is 5,700 nautical miles. But a long-range version capable of 7,250 miles is due to enter service later this year.



Good fit: John Burke (left) and Pat Molloy after yesterday's £600m deal

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

Building society revolution: Survivors shore up defences and crack down on opening of new accounts

Bank of Ireland's £600m lures B&W to join stampede

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

Bristol & West, Britain's ninth-largest building society, joined the stampede from mutualism yesterday with its sale to the Bank of Ireland for £600m, as other societies urgently sought to shore up their defences against speculators.

All the Bristol & West's 1.1 million members stand to benefit from the cash and share hand-out, estimated to be worth about £1,000 each, though long-term savers will enjoy higher rewards.

Birmingham Midshires, one of the few remaining building societies of any size, yesterday moved against the speculative rush to open new accounts in the hope of benefiting from eventual windfall conversion payouts by raising the minimum sum needed to open a membership account from £100 to £1,500 in its 17 highest branches, claiming queues of speculators have been interfering with normal branch business.

In its remaining branches, the threshold has been raised to £500. Chelsea BS said it is actively reviewing its £1,000 minimum investment, and the Leeds & Holbeck is reviewing its membership threshold, currently £500.

The announcement ended months of speculation about the future of Bristol & West, which closed its doors to new speculators last Thursday, and increases the pressure on the dwindling band of big societies still committed to mutualism.

Last week Northern Rock announced plans to convert to bank status, joining Halifax, Leeds, Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester. Two others, National & Provincial and the Cheltenham & Gloucester, have recently been taken over by banks.

Bank of Ireland, Ireland's oldest bank, said the move would generate significant synergies in its UK operations, and could be achieved without recourse to a rights issue.

"The strategic weakness in Britain is that we have not had access to retail. This overcomes that weakness," Pat Molloy, Bank of Ireland's chief executive, said. "Above all, what attracted us was the strong franchise."

Bristol & West's members will vote on the deal early next year, and if approved it could be completed by mid-1997. Under the terms, the Bristol & West will continue to be based in the west of England, and retain its own identity, brands and management structure.

John Burke, chief executive, said there would be no compulsory redundancies. "It offers a perfect opportunity to build on the strength of the Bank of Ireland," he said. The deal will combine Bristol & West with Bank of Ireland Mortgages based in Reading.

Mr Molloy said the £600m acquisition was priced at 1.7 times Bristol & West's net assets, and that the deal would be immediately revenue-enhancing. One City analyst estimated the deal would be earnings-en-

hancing to the tune of 8 to 9 per cent. "People are very pleased that Bank of Ireland has done something to use up its excess capital," the dealer said.

Mr Molloy and Mr Burke said the deal would help their companies' access to capital, giving Bristol & West the ability to raise wholesale finance while

the Bank of Ireland's balance sheet would benefit from the society's cheaper retail funds.

Mr Burke said the Bank of Ireland was the only suitor the building society had negotiated with though others had expressed interest.

"It was such a good fit there was not a need to talk to too

many others provided the price was right," Mr Burke said. The society had considered a stock market flotation but in the end decided to seek a merger. The society had reviewed its position as a mutual following the decision by Halifax, the biggest building society, to convert.

He said recent government proposals for new legislation allowing building societies greater access to capital markets, a wider range of products to offer customers and protection from hostile takeovers was "too little too late".

Bank of Ireland shares ended yesterday up 19p at 458p.



One-off: Kenneth Clarke backed the increase for the EBRD

EBRD capital doubled to £16.4bn

HELEN MINGAY

Western finance ministers yesterday agreed to dig deeper into their pockets to finance economic development in eastern Europe. At the annual meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development yesterday, they formally agreed to double the bank's capital base from £10bn (£8.2bn) to £16.4bn.

The increase was welcomed even by Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has in the past raised doubts about the need for the EBRD. But Mr Clarke said this first increase in its capital would also be the last.

"Three years ago such an increase would have been inconceivable," he said, alluding to the bank's reputation for extravagance under its former president, Jacques Attali. He paid tribute to the achievements of Jacques de Larosière, the current president, in transforming the EBRD while holding running costs constant.

In future, ministers intend the EBRD to be self-financing, like other international organisations such as the World Bank.

All ministers from the 57 member countries have agreed to the capital increase, a process made more palatable to financially strapped treasuries by agreeing to spread payments over an eight-year period, starting in April 1998, and by allowing 60 per cent of payments to be made in promissory notes.

Mr de Larosière received countless other plaudits for turning the bank around since he took over the helm three and a half years ago. He has transformed Mr Attali's "glittering bank" - noted for the luxury of its London headquarters - into a model of fiscal respectability. Overheads have dropped from 30 to 24 per cent of the operating budget, albeit at the cost of levelling staff salaries, and much of the "glitter" is being torn out of the headquarters building to prepare floors for sub-letting.

Mr de Larosière's hair-shirt approach to running the institution has even earned the approval of the US delegation, which stopped its payments to the bank during Mr Attali's tenure.

The assistant secretary for international affairs at the US treasury, David Lipton, said that bank payments had been restored and "the administration will be asking Congress to

pay down the rest of the appropriation".

The only note of dispute in Sofia came over the question of "graduation" for the more advanced central European countries, notably Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. Western ministers are urging bank officials to seek out investments in the more "difficult" countries of the former Soviet Union. They want central European countries to switch to commercial borrowing as they achieve investment grade status.

Polish and Hungarian delegates are concerned that the bank will fund fewer of their projects.

Mr Clarke added that east European countries should do better in liberalising their economies to encourage foreign investment.

Three more firms to seek flotations

NIGEL COPE

Three companies announced plans to seek stock market listings yesterday, including a manufacturer of satellite and cable TV decoders and a lingerie retailer that hopes to open more than 100 stores in the UK over the next few years.

Separately, Nigel Whittaker, the former Kingfisher director who left the retail group in a boardroom clear-out last year, has emerged as non-executive chairman of Cardcast, a company that specialises in combating credit card fraud.

Shares in the company were priced at 85p last month and start trading on the Alternative Investment Market today. Cardcast has developed a database of stolen cards which it communicates electronically to retailers' computer systems. It is raising £1.7m from the float. The company declined to reveal Mr Whittaker's salary or how much time he would be spending with the group.

Pace Micro Systems, which claims to be Europe's largest maker of satellite receivers, is the largest of the new listings announced yesterday. It is hoping to achieve a full listing of the company by the end of June in a float that will value the company at around £200m.

The company develops, makes and distributes receivers and decoders for satellite and cable television transmissions. It was founded in 1982 and is still wholly owned by its four main directors including chairman David Hood, who owns 64 per cent, and chief executive Barry Rubery, who controls 26 per cent.

Peter Morgan, former director general of the Institute of Directors and former chairman of the electricity company Swalec, was appointed as non-executive chairman of Pace last month.

Vanguard Medica, a Guildford-based bio-pharmaceutical, hopes to raise £40m from a float on the main market next month. No ordinary shares are being sold. The placing with institutions and other investors will enable the company to concentrate on the development and commercialisation of drugs, rather than their discovery, the company says.

La Senza, the lingerie and sleepwear chain, confirmed plans to seek a listing on AIM in a float that will raise £15m. Formerly in Canada in 1990, it has been testing stores in the UK for the last 10 months. It has 22 shops in Britain but hopes to extend the number to more than 100 over the next few years.

Think-tank counts the cost of a minimum wage

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The introduction of a national minimum wage of as little as £3.50 an hour could result in the closure of small firms and shops, job losses and higher prices, according to preliminary research from the Employment Policy Institute, an independent think-tank.

Interviews with a wide range of employers likely to be affected by a minimum wage, to which the Labour Party is in principle committed, suggested

that its effects could be dramatic. Even allowing for the fact that firms have an incentive to exaggerate the likely effects, as many as 3.5 million people who are currently paid less than £3.50 an hour would become more expensive to employ.

"A national minimum wage would mean a total restructuring of all these firms," said Fred Bayliss, the EPI researcher.

He identified catering and related industries such as hotels, textiles, industrial cleaning, hairdressing and healthcare as

those that would be extensively affected by the introduction of a legal minimum. For example, more than two-thirds of part-time women and about a half of full-time women working in catering and related businesses earn less than £3.50 an hour. In textiles and clothing, which is covered by collective agreements with unions, around a third of female staff earn less.

Mr Bayliss also suggested that there could be significant industrial restructuring in some industries where big employers generally pay higher rates of pay

than small ones. In retailing, for instance, most big supermarkets pay most staff a basic rate above £3.50. It is small and specialist retailers who pay less.

"The supermarkets know a national minimum wage will push out smaller units and direct custom towards them. They are not displeased," he said.

An even broader range of businesses would face knock-on effects if the minimum wage was set above the bottom of their pay scales. Any attempt to restore differentials would raise pay at all levels. This effect

could be considerable in areas such as local authorities and motor-vehicle retail and repair, where there are graduated skill-related pay scales.

The firms co-operating with the EPI told Mr Bayliss their response could range from passing on higher costs to customers to cutting jobs in industries like retailing where stiff competition made it impossible to raise prices. Some said a minimum wage would create a strong incentive to switch work to the "informal" economy.

Many were concerned that a

minimum wage would not simply set a floor to wages, but would be used to raise the incomes of the low-paid relative to the average over time.

The employers also raised practical concerns, such as whether a lower training rate for young employees would be allowed, whether the introduction of a national minimum wage would be phased in and how it would be enforced. They voiced strong opposition to a new set of government inspectors, and some suggested using the national insurance inspectorate.

STOCK MARKETS					
FT-SE 100	Dow Jones	Nikkei	FTSE 250	FTSE 350	FTSE 100
3790.50	+23.70	+0.6	3790.50	3639.50	3.91
4416.70	+8.70	+0.2	4416.70	4015.30	3.36
1908.00	+10.10	+0.5	1908.00	1816.80	3.79
FT Small Cap	2130.37	+6.41	2130.37	1954.06	3.03
FT All Share	1885.31	+8.81	1885.31	1791.95	3.73
New York	5582.93	+30.34	5582.93	3832.08	2.17
Tokyo	21883.04	+222.57	21883.04	19734.70	0.721
Hong Kong	10949.57	+99.77	10949.57	10073.39	3.331
Frankfurt	2545.94	+34.16	2545.94	2253.88	1.961

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling			UK medium gilt		
1 Month	5.94	8.25	8.09	8.32	8.19
3 Month	5.98	8.25	8.50	7.04	6.81
6 Month	6.47	8.84	1.95	2.79	-
1 Year	6.38	3.38	6.46	7.06	7.21

BOND YIELDS					
1 Month			Long Bond		
UK	5.94	8.25	8.09	8.32	8.19
US	5.98	8.25	8.50	7.04	6.81
Japan	6.47	8.84	1.95	2.79	-
Germany	6.38	3.38	6.46	7.06	7.21

CURRENCIES					
\$/£			\$/DM		
1.5078	-0.35c	1.5155	1.6632	+0.15	0.6190
1.5090	-0.55c	1.6230	1.6627	+0.24	0.6161
2.2773	+0.48c	2.2157	1.5104	+0.57c	1.3715
163.403	-0.83c	132.592	108.375	-0.3	82.075
83.6	unch	84.4	99.9	+0.1	88.0

OTHER INDICATORS					
Oil Brent \$			RPI		
21.76	+0.01	17.68	150.9+2.7pc	146.9	18 Apr
393.00	-1.15	389.10	GDP	107.0+2.0pc	106.1
260.64	-0.16	242.73	Base Rates	-6.00pc	6.75

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HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THE 1995 REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

- Sales of £97.6m show 14% increase despite difficult economic conditions and unprecedentedly high levels of raw material increases.
- Profit of £48.4m on continuing operations only marginally below the 1994 result.
- Restructuring programme, including selective divestments, on schedule.
- Product innovation plus developments in USA and Eastern Europe, augurs well for an improving situation.

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COMMENT

What better way to whet the appetite of investors than to complain they are being offered outrageous dividends. Well done, Clare

Railtrack sale is straight off the back of a lorry

Did SBC Warburg set a trap for Clare Short, with its little wheeze of paying a £69m dividend out of last year's Railtrack profits, earned while the company was in the public sector?

She described the initiative, confirmed in yesterday's prospectus, as a "monstrous outrage" and who knows, from a moral perspective she may well be right. But it certainly hasn't done prospects for this most controversial of privatisations any harm.

On the contrary, it served to underline the generosity of the post-privatisation dividend policy, giving another kick to the smoothly orchestrated marketing campaign. What better way to whet the appetite of investors than to complain they are being offered outrageous dividends. Well done, Clare.

Together with the £30m interim next February, the dividend commitment will bring a handsome 12-month return of 11-12 per cent on the 199p part-paid shares. And there is plenty more where that came from. Private investors get the first instalment at a discount to the total first-year return is approaching 20 per cent - tax free for those who use Peps - or about four times as much as from a building society.

Furthermore, the second instalment is payable in a new tax year, allowing those who want to fill their boots - and their single company Peps - with Railtrack to use a full two years of allowances. Bar giving this company away, the Government could

scarcely have done more to ensure a successful issue.

These share incentives are only part of the investment story. The regulator has also agreed that Railtrack can keep 75 per cent of property profits above those already taken into account in setting track access charges. More important than both of these, the regulatory regime, setting track access charges at inflation minus 2 per cent from now on, is a good deal less onerous than might it might have been.

Furthermore, the slogan has been taken out of the performance regime which in theory should be forcing Railtrack to pay compensation for any mishaps that delay trains. In the first couple of years, Railtrack will be reimbursed for almost all the penalties incurred, and they will not be fully phased in until after the end of the century.

It was always inevitable that Railtrack would be priced to sell rather than to maximise revenue for the taxpayer. As it is, the Government has chosen to knock the shares out as if they had fallen off the back of a lorry. Labour's bluster won't halt this one.

Flexible labour makes for a feel-bad factor

At the Lille jobs summit earlier this month, ministers and officials went out of their way to extol the benefits of the flexible, deregulated labour market. However,

there is at least one aspect of Britain's approach to the jobs market that Kenneth Clarke will not be boasting of to his European counterparts, and that is its tendency to deliver a lower tax take than the old "jobs-for-life" way of organising things. Government figures later this week are expected to confirm that public borrowing last financial year was at least £300 higher than the Treasury forecast at the time of the last Budget and some £11m higher than predicted 18 months ago. This is only in part due to the Treasury's notoriously unreliable forecasting record. Nor is it wholly accounted for by the Government's failure to deliver promised cuts in public spending. The villain is a much lower tax take than anticipated.

Both the Treasury and Customs & Excise have begun inquiries into how they could have gone so badly awry. The answer is likely to be that it wasn't really their fault: the economy has changed so fundamentally that it doesn't behave as it used to. Just as this has been a recovery without the feel-good factor, for much the same reasons it has also been a recovery without the expected rise in tax yield. It is not just in the area of corporation tax and VAT - where the accounts have been working overtime to minimise returns - that the tax take is falling short of expectations. Across the board, tax yields have been lower than they should have been for this stage of the recovery.

This in turn may have been caused by the changing nature of the workplace. Well-

paid, full-time jobs that deliver reliable and predictable returns to the Inland Revenue continue to be shed at a frightening pace. As often as not they are replaced by lower-paid, often temporary, part-time work. Meanwhile the black economy is blossoming in a way that partly compensates for the lower earnings to be had out of legitimate employment. (The Government denies this but the wealth of anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise). Furthermore, because continued job insecurity (the most potent feature of the feel-bad factor) discourages spending, indirect tax such as VAT is not growing at the rate it should.

Large corporations with their state of the art tax-avoidance techniques make an easy and politically beguiling explanation for poor tax returns but they are only a minor part of the problem. When Kenneth Clarke next urges our Continental partners to adopt the Anglo-Saxon approach to labour markets, he had better warn them; it won't make their task of meeting the Maastricht criteria on public borrowing any easier.

Too little, too late for building societies

As the stampede from mutualism continues, the Government's efforts to provide special conservation status for the endangered building society movement look increasingly irrelevant.

John Burke, chief executive of Bristol & West, which yesterday announced its sale to the Bank of Ireland, rightly described them as "too little, too late". The answer to the question, can they be saved, is being loudly trumpeted by the market, and sounds very much like "certainly not". While, no doubt, a few well-rooted regional societies will remain, relics of a bygone age, the days of building societies as a significant part of savings and lending in Britain are rapidly being counted.

Is this a mistake we will all come to regret? Are we standing by while some inherently superior form of doing business is being crushed by the brute force of capitalism on the rampage, as some of the more melodramatic of the stakeholder apologists would have us fear? Surely not.

Markets by their very nature evolve, and those firms that thrive are the ones that best achieve the difficult balance of keeping customers, employees and shareholders or stakeholders happy, whatever the form or label given to their way of doing business. More ridiculous, however, is the alarmist suggestion that these once cautious businesses, as soon as they convert to plc status, will lose their heads in profligate lending, speculating, sowing the seeds of a UK savings and loans disaster of US or Japanese proportions.

Building societies never offered a panacea against poor management, just as plcs are no recipe for disaster.

IN BRIEF

• **Costs Virella**, the textiles group, is to cut 2,700 jobs in the UK and India as part of a £50m re-structuring programme announced earlier this year. Around 1,300 of the redundancies will take place in the UK over the next two to three years. The company has yet to disclose details of the cuts though it has large factories in the East Midlands, Northern Ireland and West Scotland. A further 1,400 voluntary redundancies are to be sought in India. The company blamed intense competition from lower-cost international producers for the action.

• **The UK venture capital industry** enjoyed a bumper year in 1995 with investment by UK firms up by 22 per cent to £2bn. According to a survey by the British Venture Capital Association, investment in the East Midlands rose by nearly four-and-a-half times in 1995. The South-east share of the total investment remained constant at 34 per cent. Scotland remained popular with venture capitalists with more companies per thousand receiving investment there than in any other UK region. The South-west had the lowest number.

• **Time Warner**, the media and entertainment group, reported a deeper first-quarter loss because of sluggish music sales and higher costs relating to several large cable acquisitions. Operating losses of \$93m (£62m) compared with a \$47m loss a year earlier, were greater than analysts had been expecting. Sales in the music division were down as retailers cut prices and the direct marketing business was also weak. Group sales rose 17 per cent to \$4.56bn.

• **The Takeover Panel** is investigating certain valuations used by Redland in its bid for Enamix, the aggregates company. The investigation follows a complaint by Enamix about statements made by Redland in a document that questioned its net asset valuation. The dispute centres on a valuation carried out by Grimley, the chartered surveyors. The panel's executive said it is discussing the matters with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. Redland has bid 33p per share for Enamix, valuing the company at £5.8m.

• **John Melbourn** has been appointed a non-executive director of Tesco, the supermarkets group. Mr Melbourn is a director and deputy group chief executive of National Westminster Bank. City Diary, page 18

• **KS Biomedix**, the fledgling biotechnology group, has announced the start of phase II clinical trials of its rheumatoid arthritis drug, CBF-BS2. The results of the double blind trial involving 120 patients are due by June next year, but preliminary results are expected at the end of 1996. Earlier preliminary studies showed 76 per cent of a sample of 33 patients registered an improvement after treatment with the compound. The estimated market for this type of rheumatoid arthritis drug is said to be worth \$1bn a year.

Imro to shake up high-risk firms

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

Imro, the City watchdog, yesterday announced a radical plan to tighten the supervision of responsible firms to focus on those judged a high risk to investors. Imro, which mainly regulates the fund management industry, also called for a national campaign to educate people about investment after research revealed a "lamentable level of ignorance in the majority of investors".

Philip Thorpe, chief executive said: "We are now looking at a population that must make decisions about retirement, health, housing and education where in the past we may have been able to rely on the state for assistance. But we cannot expect people to take responsibility for difficult financial decisions without sufficient understanding."

Mr Thorpe said Imro's proposals were based on rewarding firms that put investors first by easing the burden of external regulation. Those that had proved themselves worthy of trust would be expected to take on increased internal compliance commitments.

Imro will introduce the new regulatory proposals through a pilot project that will run into next year, involving 50 firms selected from a broad cross-section of its 1,100 member firms. "While, inevitably, there will

be firms and individuals that will continue to respond only to discipline, the majority of firms have a capacity to respond to more positive forms of encouragement," Mr Thorpe said.

Conceding that there was a high risk to Imro should the experiment back-fire, Mr Thorpe said the watchdog would be most careful about the firms it selected.

If the pilot proves successful, the idea is to move quickly to a tailored form of regulation for the substantial majority of Imro members.

"After all, it is only about 10 per cent of our firms that seem to be chronically unable to meet the good investment criteria, and it is on them we wish to concentrate our efforts," he said.

The criteria for inclusion in Imro's new project include a good regulatory history, strong internal compliance, sound finances, and above all an assessment that the firm poses a low risk to investors. Imro's risk assessment will remain confidential.

"We are very resistant to the idea of handing out risk ratings, that is not our business," said Mr Thorpe.

Those firms allowed lighter regulation will receive more frequent, but shorter visits from Imro, and will be allowed a greater opportunity for self-correction.

Alongside the proposed changes in the way it conducts regulation, Imro said there was an urgent, national need for promoting investor awareness. Research last year showed investors continue to have a poor understanding of investments generally. Mr Thorpe said Imro hoped to combine with other regulators, consumer bodies and educational authorities to start initiatives. Noting that in the US, trade bodies sponsor competitions in schools, Mr Thorpe said increasing financial awareness needed to begin at a much earlier stage.



The finalists in Veve Clicquot's business woman of the year contest were announced today. The three finalists pictured here are (from left): Linda Allen, managing director of Norfolk-based Howard Long International, which prepares food for supermarkets and restaurants; Rosalyn Wilton, managing director

of Reuters Transaction Products, and Annoushka Ducas, managing director of jewellery and giftware company Links of London. The other two finalists are Janet Holmes a Court, chairman of the Stoll Moss Theatres Foundation, and Mary-Lorraine Hughes, managing director of Stoke on Trent-based Portmeirion Potteries.

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AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR MEMBERS OF BRISTOL & WEST

As you may already know, the Board of the Bristol & West Building Society yesterday announced that it intends to recommend to Members that Bristol & West should become part of Bank of Ireland Group.

Customers of Bristol & West are being sent a Notice explaining the reasons for the decision together with a leaflet, *Answers to Your Questions*.

A free Information Line has been set up on 0800 886633. Lines will be open from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday and 8.00 am to 1.00 pm on Saturdays.

Full details about the transaction will be circulated in due course in a Transfer

Document for consideration at a Special General Meeting of the Society when eligible

Members will have the opportunity to vote on the proposal.

Members should note, however, that no decisions are to be taken

on this matter at the Society's Annual General Meeting on 19 April 1996.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

BAA cashes in on dwell time

Fry pale after demise of BES

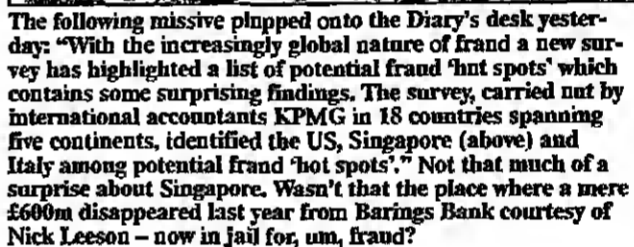
Soros on Soros, straight from the horse's mouth

CITY DIARY

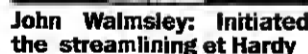
JOHN WILLCOCK

Now it can be told. The re-

Molins is also the world's largest maker of small and medium-sized cigarette-making machines.



Hardy Oil & Gas sells US operations



Baker declined to name any specific areas where the group was seeking deals.

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
AG Holdings (F)	14.3p (13.4m)	1.57m (1.18m)	5.3p (4.2p)	2.25p (2.25p)
Amey (F)	244m (220m)	5.32m (5.12m)	12.7p (12.9p)	7.1p (4.5p)
Arcafin Int'l (F)	20.5m (12.6m)	1.69m (0.42m)	1.1p (0.2p)	1p (0.3p)
Arcus (F)	28.1m (23.2m)	4.0m (3.1m)	3.9p (2.5p)	0.7p (0.9p)
Brambles Group (F)	49.0m (44.4m)	2.71m (1.66m)	3.1p (3.5p)	1.5p (1.5p)
Dixie's Deal (F)	7.47m (6.73m)	0.59m (0.59m)	3.59p (3.47p)	1.5p (1.41p)
Johnson Fry (F)	30.9m (29.8m)	2.88m (4.18m)	20.7p (17.9p)	4p (2p)
Obay Property (F)	1	0.75m (0.62m)	1.27p (1.16p)	0.4p (0.3p)
Wardlaw Strays (F)	53.8m (44.2m)	4.82m (3.43m)	12.5p (8.1p)	6p (6p)

(F) = Fiscal (M) = Market (N) = Nine months

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

on Monday

A new regular section, Family Life, that deals with the interests and problems of parents and children. Julie Myerson's column also focuses on home life. Plus: a new series - *Do we need?* - which challenges the icons of modern Britain. And, every Monday unrivalled coverage of the expanding world of information technology in our Network pull-out section.

on Tuesday

Health: how wearing a virtual reality helmet could help cure phobias and other psychological problems.
Plus: flaky nails are not simply a problem for the vain

on Wednesday

Bridget Jones's diary continues to chronicle the encounters and exquisite embarrassments in the life of Britain's most-read spinster. Plus: the midweek travel section, your money, finance

on **Thursday**

All our regular features, including Virginia Ironside's Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education

OF

24Seven – a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

and in Sport

A 24-page tabloid section with all the action from the weekend's sporting action. Plus: the Monday interview in which a leading figure comes under the microscope, an unbeatable results service, gossip, speculation and fact from behind the scenes and the best in sports photography.

but a sign of ill-health, so what can be done about them? Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media.

and law. In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Nell Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

and graduate plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10½ inches

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights. Plus: eight pages of pop and classical music



Germany marks time as the dollar finds its level

Normalisation is one of those English words used only by people to whom English is not a first language, but you can see why Hans Tietmeyer, president of the Bundesbank, was employing it at the weekend to describe the recent decline of the mark. For the surge in the mark over the last year has been quite abnormal and recent declines have gone only some way to restoring it to a level German exporters find acceptable. Indeed, if you wanted to find one single reason for the new recession in Germany the strength of the mark must be at the top of the pile.

Yesterday the currency fell further, breaking through key chart levels against the dollar of DM1.5075 and DM1.5065, leading to suggestions that "normalisation" still has a long way to run.

When currencies refuse to do what they ought rationally to be doing, the obvious question is: how long can they behave in this way, and how much damage will they cause meanwhile? When currencies behave as they ought to, the questions are: will they continue to correct, will they stop, or will they overshoot; and how quickly will previous damage be repaired?

It is time now to start applying these second set of questions to the key tripartite currency relationship of the world, that between the dollar, the mark and the yen.

The background to this question is set out in the left-hand graph: as you can see there has been a sharp and sustained recovery of the dollar against the yen since April of last year, taking place in two phases. There was a bounce from June/July through to September, then a steady consolidation to the present.



ECONOMIC VIEW HAMISH McRAE

Against the mark, however, while the trough of the dollar was less pronounced, there has been only the most muted of recoveries: we are not yet back to the level of the beginning of last year.

Determining the "right" level for currencies is always a black art, and in the dollar rate is in any case a crude proxy for any currency's value. But there is a common-sense case to be made that the dollar/yen rate of close to ¥110 gives the Japanese economy a chance to stage a recovery, whereas the DM1.50 rate is still damaging to the German one.

That would square with what seems to be happening. A Japanese recovery, still desperately fragile, at last seems to be taking place; but the German economy has been pushed

charts - are now looking for the dollar to climb to around DM1.60 and ¥120. There are two further arguments to support this, at least as far as the mark is concerned. One is interest rate differentials.

The implied forward market forecast for US interest rates, set out in the right-hand chart, shows a climb to 6 per cent by the end of next year, which would certainly underpin any such move.

German interest rates, projected on the same basis, are flat through most of this year, maybe rising a little towards the end. (Interest rate differentials are by no means the only force governing currencies, but they do have a strong influence on them.) The other is momentum. It is an observable fact that once currencies

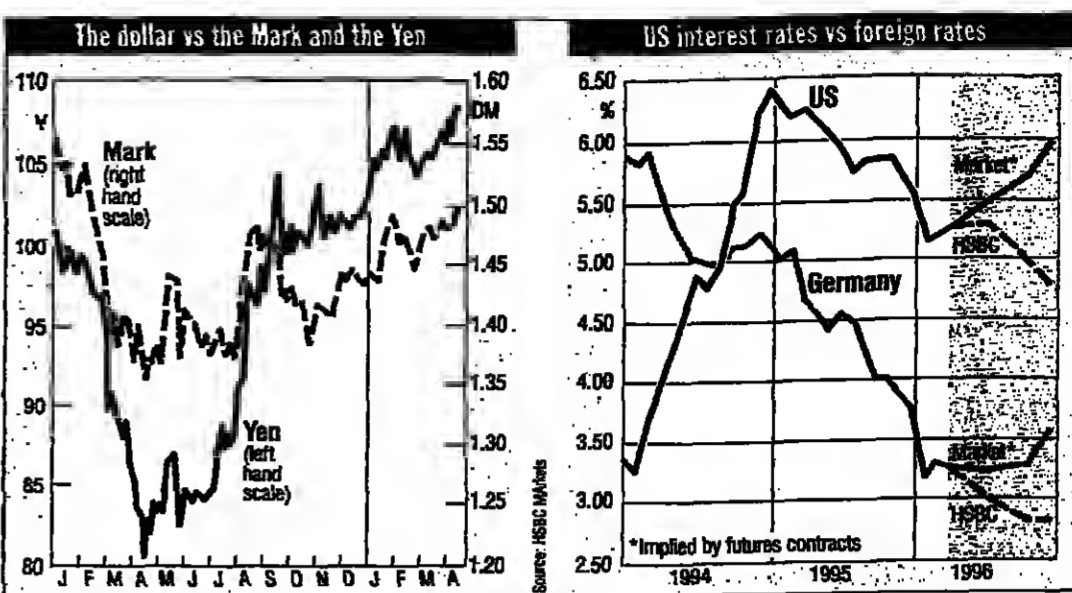
one might therefore expect a sustained, if bumpy, climb of the dollar for the next couple of years before it became obvious that a new downturn would have to begin. My own view is that just such a bumpy upswing will be sustained, though I would hate to be tied down to a statement of its likely duration. But there are reasonable doubts.

Some of these come from future interest rate movements. Aside from showing the forward market projects the right-hand graph also shows some other forecasts of dollar and mark interest rates from HSBC Markets. Other City forecasters would also accept that the rise in rates implied by the forward markets is too sharp.

These show a very different pattern: steady US rates through the summer of this year, and then falling rates from the autumn onwards; and more slowly falling mark rates.

Leave aside the mark forecast and focus on the US one, for if that is right, it would knock away the interest rate support for the dollar. That would not necessarily reverse the dollar's recovery, but it would knock it on the head.

Other doubts come from the policy-makers: whether officialdom in the US, Germany and Japan wants a continued dollar recovery. The yen is more affected by Japanese policy than the mark by German, and while both the ministry of finance and the Bank of Japan have been firmly in favour of the movement over the last year a rate somewhere between ¥110 and ¥120 may be deemed appropriate. As for the mark, while the remarks of Dr Tietmeyer suggest that a further fall in the mark is welcomed there, the Bundesbank certainly does not want a weak currency.



As for the US, this is an election year, so anything (like an over-strong dollar) which undermined

assurance is that if the dollar does push up to those chart points noted above, the officials will start to try

are, in part at least, structural. A lower mark and franc are helpful in that they make structural reforms more acceptable politically - it is much easier to push through unpleasant policies if the economy is growing well - but that is all.

The moral here is surely threefold. First, that "normalisation" is immensely welcome, and that it will be even more welcome if it continues awhile yet. Second, that some further dollar rise is likely (which, incidentally, could mean a pound back in the \$1.40 region).

And third, that if this rise does occur it merely creates a set of circumstances which make it easier for Japan and Europe to make the structural changes to their economy which they know they have to do; it will not of itself solve their problem.

'Determining the rate of currencies has always been a black art'

back into recession. Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, told his EU colleagues at the Verona meeting last weekend that "there is very little chance of 1.5 per cent growth this year" and the latest market forecasts put growth at less than 1 per cent.

So the first question; will the currencies continue to correct?

The technical analysts - the people who draw patterns from the

head solidly in one direction, it takes quite a lot to stop them. The dollar is in an upswing, so anyone who has bought it in recent months will have made money. Human nature being what it is, dealers have to have quite a strong view to want to bet against it until new information comes along. That is why currencies frequently overshoot.

If the normal long-term cyclical pattern of the past were repeated,

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	15078	7-5	21-18	1000	-	-	-
Canada	20448	1-3	50-57	13563	2-1	2-0	0-8880
Germany	22773	55-48	127-147	1504	28-28	30-76	10000
France	22773	140-18	371-404	5250	84-57	84-54	33831
Italy	22701	75-50	221-248	12040	57-64	70-82	171205
Japan	18540	75-70	225-218	10638	45-44	124-123	104777
ECU	12855	5-11	20-25	1284	7-8	23-25	203393
Belgium	48774	12-9	34-29	31022	58-48	122-147	338612
Denmark	67308	138-45	411-517	58305	60-40	175-125	338612
Netherlands	25459	63-64	89-776	10855	32-29	96-61	11179
Sweden	10987	9-4	26-30	15562	8-10	10-10	43148
Norway	98361	116-64	329-233	6571	42-17	100-80	634349
Spain	9001	28-35	72-68	18502	23-27	44-72	10146
Switzerland	1072	9-16	23-24	8785	98-122	200-310	44687
Australia	18560	88-80	197-185	12203	38-35	111-105	08148
South Africa	19085	10-11	37-35	10557	19-21	54-58	06380
Hong Kong	11662	101-01	224-70	5247	2-12	15-35	5210
Malaysia	37367	0-0	0-0	2515	4-14	60-80	18828
New Zealand	22227	43-57	133-55	1491	30-32	88-90	07958
Saudi Arabia	65543	0-0	0-0	37502	2-7	9-14	24828
Singapore	21290	0-0	0-0	1420	41-30	103-88	09349

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	15089	0.0992	0.0992	834000	-	-	-
Australia	16035	0.0828	0.0828	03850	-	-	-
Brazil	14939	0.0869	0.0869	34823	-	-	-
Canada	12045	0.0828	0.0828	26500	-	-	-
Chile	5321	0.0869	0.0869	54895	-	-	-
Colombia	71456	0.0869	0.0869	34845	-	-	-
Czech	23788	0.0869	0.0869	49500	-	-	-
Denmark	36648	0.0869	0.0869	63842	-	-	-
France	51589	0.0869	0.0869	27400	-	-	-
Germany	04330	0.0869	0.0869	55324	-	-	-

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; rates quoted low to high are at a premium. Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0800 123 3033. Cuts cost 30p per minute (cheaper rates 40p other times).

Interest Rates

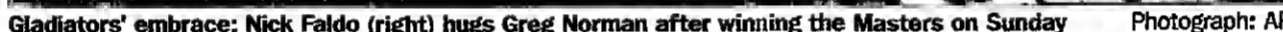
Interest Rates			
UK		Germany	
Base	6.00%	Discount	3.00%
France		Lombard	5.00%
Intervention	3.70%	Canada	
Italy		Prime	7.00%
Discount	9.00%	Discount	5.50%
Netherlands		Discount	
Advances	2.80%	Discount	3.75%

Bond Yields				
Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
UK	8.00%	7/5	8 1/2%	8/4
US	5 1/4%	6/25	5 1/4%	6/4
Japan	8 1/4%	2/24	3 1/4%	3/21
Australia	8 1/4%	8/25	10%	9/27
Germany	5 1/4%	5/40	8%	6/45
France	5 1/4%	5/1	7 1/4%	6/58

*Yields include capital gains and losses

Faldo shows humanity in victory

The following year Faldo was



goal was simply to have a good tournament. The big thrill is to go out and do it on the day. You never know when you've got another win in you. It's a great feeling to know you still have it.

"The Masters has excessive

"I genuinely feel sorry for him. What he's been through is horrible. It's hard to repair that but he'll be all right."

The first crack in Norman's game appeared as early as the

Norman agreed this was the most disappointing single round of his career. "I've seen what the game gives you and what it takes from you. Maybe these hiccupps that I inflict on myself are meant for another reason. I don't know. There must be a reason. I think there's something

Norman has just made \$40 million (£26.4m) from shares in the gold club company, Cobra. "You see, there's a good thing about life. I've got something that other people haven't got. I've got 40 million bucks. God, I'd love to be putting the Green Jacket on. I'm sad about it. I'm going to regret it but it's not the end of the world for me."

He's got 40 million and he can't buy a Green Jacket.

NORMAN'S CHOKES

Greg Norman has led seven majors going into the last round and has won only one of them.

1986 Masters	led by one, bogeyed the last to lose to one by Jack Nicklaus.
1988 US Open	led by one, shoots 75 and finishes 12th, six behind Ray Floyd.
1988 Open	led by one, shoots 89 and wires by five.
1988 US PGA	led by four, shoots 76 and loses when Bob-Wetley holes from bunker in play-off.
1993 US Open	led by one, finishes 80, but loses play-off to Paul Azinger.
1993 US PGA	led by one, shoots 80 and finishes second two behind Corey Pavin.
1996 Masters	led by six, shoots 78 and loses by five to Nick Faldo.

EUROPE AND THE MASTERS

1990 GIVE BALLSTERS	1998 Jack Nicklaus	1992 Fred Couples
1981 Tom Watson	1997 Larry Mize	1993 BERNHARD LANGER
1982 Craig Stadler	1988 SANDY LYLE	1994 JOSE-MARIA OLAZABAL
1983 GIVE BALLSTERS	1989 NICK FALDO	1996 Rick DiTerenzo
1984 Ben Crenshaw	1990 NICK FALDO	1998 NICK FALDO

THE ALL-YEAR CHAMPIONS


18 majors: Jack Nicklaus (6 Masters, 4 US Opens, 3 Opens, 5 US PGAs)
10 Walter Hagen (2 US Opens, 4 Opens, 4 US Opens)
 Ben Hogan (2 Masters, 4 US Opens, 1 Open, 2 US PGAs)
 Gary Player (3 Masters, 1 US Open, 3 Opens, 2 US PGAs)
8 Tom Watson (3 Masters, 1 US Open, 5 Opens)
 Arnold Palmer (4 Masters, 1 US Open, 2 Opens)
 Bobby Jones (4 US Opens, 3 Opens)
 Sam Snead (3 Masters, 3 Opens, 3 US PGAs)
 Gene Sarazen (3 Masters, 2 US Opens, 4 Opens, 3 US PGAs)
NICK FALDO (3 Masters, 3 Opens)
 Harry Vardon (6 Opens)
 Lee Trevino (2 US Opens, 2 Opens, 2 US PGAs)
5 J H Taylor (5 Opens)
 James Braid (5 Opens)
 Peter Thomson (5 Opens)
 Seve Ballesteros (2 Masters, 3 Opens)

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Time to enlist an experienced negotiator

Those who are employed to instruct and entertain us on the great questions of the day, have been equally quiet. For where is that high moral tone for which Hugo Young is renowned? His voice is not heard. Where is Polly Toynbee? She is silent. Is there no sound even from William Rees-Mogg?

There is, however, a good deal to be said for the division between the Football Association and the Football League. Something very similar is inevitable in rugby union. The RFU would be like the FA. As Peter Wheeler, of Leicester, has said, the professional clubs do not want to tinker with the laws. My guess is that they will



ALAN WATKINS
on rugby

such as John Hall, of Bath, are against it. It is a complete waste of time and effort.

If the attachment to the old

Those rugby commentators who write off the claims of the clubs and the players as mere pretensions, do not seem to understand the law. They should try to get hold of the judgment of Mr (later Lord) Justice Slade, in the case of Derek Underwood and the MCC over the Kerry Packer

I do not want to be gratuitously offensive — heaven forbid — but, most of those involved in recent negotiations or non-negotiations do not seem to be up to the job. The

We listen, and we listen in vain.
From all this I conclude that
rugby is not quite as important
in our national life as some people
think it is. The only player
the majority of citizens could
name is Will Carting, and that
would partly be for reasons un-
connected with the game of
rugby. If there were a compa-
rable row taking place in foot-
ball or cricket, we may be sure
that there would be more
chunks of weighty comment fly-
ing around the place.

But cricket and football have
had their rows. Their structures

indeed be modified in the interests of greater movement and more "accessibility" - but that these changes will come about because of pressure from the television companies rather than because they are wanted by the clubs themselves.

As far as competitions are concerned, however, the clubs are fully entitled to impose their views on the RFU. The union's attachment to the Divisional Championship is quite extraordinary. The spectators do not flock to it. The players resent it. The new managers,

Divisional Championship is extraordinary, the new one proposed by the RFU heegars belief. Argentina, and perhaps Italy and Romania - who knows? - are to be brought in as well. At the same time the RFU proposes to restrict those selected for the divisions to those qualified for England. It has already quietly dropped (or I think it has dropped) its limitation on foreigners, including Welshmen, Scotsmen and Irishmen, in First Division sides.

If it attempted to enforce any

"circus." They might also have a look at the recent judgment of the European Court in the case of the Belgian footballer who was kept with a club against his will. United Kingdom law has always been against restraint of trade: European law, which now takes precedence over the home-grown variety, is even more opposed to it.

There are further lessons to be learnt from cricket. The truth is that the County Championship cannot properly support a fully professional

one man who has spent his entire life settling disputes does not appear to have been greatly concerned in the matter. I refer to Sir Pat Lowry, of Waspas, who was head of Acas from 1981 to 1987. Indeed, no industrial dispute was complete without the presence of Sir Pat at some stage. Sometimes he settled it, sometimes not. But at least he would know what he was doing. This is more than can be said of most of rugby's negotiators. Call in Sir Pat Lowry. That is my message for the week.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Dave Bedford

With his Zapata moustache, unruly hair and irreverent red socks, David Bedford helped substantially to popularise athletics in his spectacular front-running style. He smashed the 10,000 metres world record by some eight seconds in 1973, although his career lacked a major championship medal.

The moustache is greyer now – “a distinguished silver, kinder people would say” – but at 46 Bedford remains instantly recognised and has found seemingly the ideal niche as both head of marketing and international race director for the Flora London Marathon, charged with

wooing both sponsors and big-name participants.

After his retirement from running, Bedford had a brief career as a night-club owner before becoming heavily involved in athletics administration, often controversially. He is former secretary of both the Amateur Athletic Association and the British Athletic Federation and current chairman of Sharnsbury Barnet Hammers, his original club.

No less colourful a character off the track, he has had to temper some indulgences since falling seriously ill with a perforated colon. "Happily, I'm 100 per cent healthy now but I'm

attempting to eat fewer curries," he said.

Bedford ran in his own event in 1992 but is now merely a weekend jogger. "There is no time for serious training so I just jog around Hampstead Heath, where I always used to run. I know every inch of it. I bought a house in the village three years ago, 30 yards from the hospital where I was born."

Divorced, he has a 12-year-old son, Tom, whom he takes to watch Tottenham. "He has turned me from a lifelong QPR fan into a Spurs nut."

Jon Coulson

**TODAY'S
NUMBER**

1,138

Chris Smith's 14th-minute strike for Poole Town in Saturday's 2-1 home defeat to Margate was the struggling Dorset club's first goal in 1,138 minutes of Beazer Homes League football. Their previous goal was scored on 3 February against Havant. Poole have gained just one point all season.

**Ske
cons
Wire**

Rugby League

Ainslie has Sailing

Smith

Cricket

Rydell and E
limelight at

Tr.
C.
H.

Thomas's run

SPORT

THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

How Greg Norman lost and Nick Faldo won the Masters

Page 22

Beresford apologises for outburst

Football

RUPERT METCALF
AND PHIL SHAW

John Beresford, the Newcastle United full-back, was obliged to issue a public apology yesterday following his very public disagreement with his manager, Kevin Keegan, during the Magpies' edgy 1-0 Premiership win over Aston Villa on Sunday.

In full view of both St James' Park spectators and the Sky Sports television cameras, Beresford and Keegan had a heated argument on the touchline moments after the manager had substituted his England B left-back after only 25 minutes of the match.

"I was totally out of order," Beresford admitted. "Tensions were running high with so much at stake. I cannot stress enough how sorry I am for what was two seconds of madness."

"The gaffer shouted some instructions which I felt were not suited to me and I reacted stupidly. I swore and I put him in a predicament. He was right to bring me off. It was the worst moment of my career. I am annoyed that with all my experience I reacted like that."

Following the match, Keegan had said: "I told him something I thought he was doing wrong and when he answered me back like that, I just told him he was coming off. I just had to do it. I don't think any player should talk to a manager in that way - but that will be the end of it."

The Ipswich Town chairman, David Sheepshanks, has promised strong action against the supporters accused of assaulting four Norwich City players after Sunday's East Anglian derby at Portman Road ended with a pitch invasion. "Everything has been recorded on camera and, if there are guilty parties, the club will have no alternative but to take very strong action," Sheepshanks said. Ipswich won the First Division match 2-1 thanks to a Robert Ullathorne own goal four minutes from full-time, after Bryan Gunn, the Norwich goalkeeper, failed to clear a back-pass. Gunn was allegedly involved in a scuffle with fans behind his net before the final whistle.

Ajax will be without their talented Dutch international, Patrick Kluivert, when they attempt to overturn a 1-0 deficit in the second leg of their European Cup semi-final with Panathinaikos in Athens tomorrow. The striker has a knee injury.

On the domestic front, Duncan Ferguson is almost certain to miss tonight's Merseyside derby with a recurrence of a groin injury. The Everton striker is unlikely to be included in the Scotland squad which will be named today for the visit to the European champions, Denmark, a week tomorrow. Ferguson, who has had two hernia operations, may need a third during the close season, which would rule him out of the European Championship finals. Also facing a fitness battle is the

Rangers defender Alan McLea, who will undergo a knee operation in May.

Blackburn may be without two forwards, Alan Shearer (groin injury) and Graham Fenton (back) for tomorrow's Premiership game against Wimbledon. Tomas Broin is unlikely to be in the Leeds side to visit Manchester United tomorrow and may have played his last game for the club. Howard Wilkinson, the Leeds manager, was unhappy that the Swede reiterated his intention to leave in the summer after the defeat at Chelsea on Saturday.

Another foreign player on the move could be Uwe Rösler. Sheffield Wednesday, who had an offer rejected by Manchester City earlier in the season, hope to land the German striker for £2.5m once the season ends. John Pemberton, the Leeds defender, may miss the rest of the season after damaging knee ligaments at Chelsea on Saturday.

Mitch Cook, Scarborough's director of coaching, has been severely reprimanded by the Third Division club's chairman, John Russell, following allegations that Cook had taken a group of players to a wine bar on the evening before Saturday's 5-1 thrashing at Plymouth Argyle. That was Scarborough's fifth defeat in five games since Cook replaced Ray McHale in charge of team affairs, and a club record seventh successive defeat for the Yorkshire side, who are second to bottom of the division.



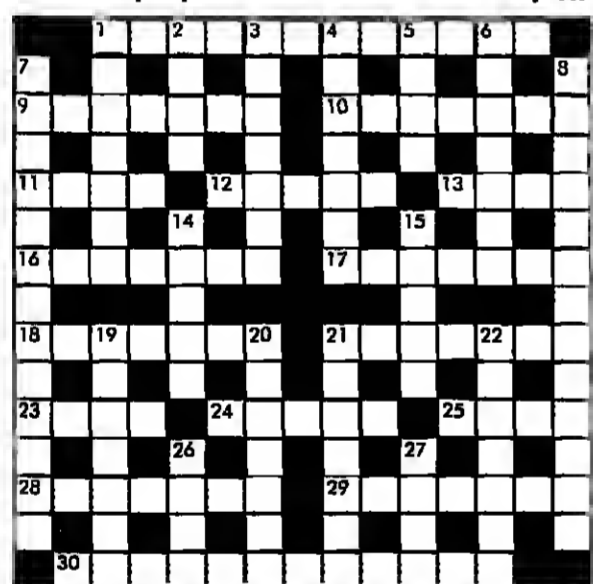
Sweeping up: India's Sachin Tendulkar plays to the boundary during his innings of 118 against Pakistan in the Sharjah Cricket Cup yesterday, as wicketkeeper Rashid Latif looks on. India won the match by 28 runs. Report, page 23. Photograph: B K Bangash/AP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

VINERS OF SHEFFIELD
161 MOST FAMOUS NAMES IN CUTLERY

No. 2962, Tuesday 16 April

By Aclred



- 3 Drowning son hero saved close to the beach (7)
4 A huge weight, gold, in back of car (7)
5 Like to hold record in mountains (4)
6 Yield to having this under joint (7)
7 In which there's no black side as far as one can see? (4,9)
8 Crude estimation of position which pathologist gives? (4,9)
14 Number of Jewish Queen's not second (5)
15 Decent book not to be finished (5)
19 On certain horse hand hat could be required, it's volatile (7)
20 One animal doctor, in refusal, shows ingenuousness (7)
21 Intend to be seen in torn garment (7)
22 Serious listener's at home (7)
26 Stamp on this Frenchman and be sick? (4)
27 One having left section of church is a bit out of the main (4)

ACROSS

- 1 How the electorate shows its gratitude? (4,2,6)
9 Uncle, possibly Uncle Sam, in the centre (7)
10 Write about some music, one of The Planets? (7)
11 Source of magic's faint by day (4)
12 Perhaps one minimally in debt shows strength (5)
13 Error in drive of floppy disk (4)
16 What baby will need, however, entering after due date (7)
17 Country's upper-class French articles with strings attached (7)
18 New article on sharp material (7)

- 21 Gutter press's feeble-sounding attempt in charity event (3,4)
23 Broken piano gives personal connection with her? (4)
24 Very cross, I had to follow short Roman historian (5)
25 One's spirit's about right to smile (4)
28 Glut of sparkling asti consumed (7)
29 Oriental leaves his place behind? (7)
30 It's the way of the medical profession (6,6)

DOWN

- 1 After holiday a conservative slips into New York opening (7)
2 Nurse leaves dish of chestnut? (4)

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Gooch ready to take up coaching

Cricket

Graham Gooch, one of eight contenders for the two vacant places on the England Test panel, has given his strongest hint yet that this could be his last summer playing for Essex.

The former England captain, who made his first-class debut in 1973 and will be 43 in July, yesterday said: "I am not getting any younger and the time has come to think seriously about the future."

"Ideally, I would like to take up a coaching post and put something back into the game which has given me so much pleasure over the years."

"Hopefully, such an opportunity will come along which suits me. In the meantime I'm just looking forward to another season with Essex."

"I've certainly got no worries over my fitness. I've been in regular training since Christmas and feel fitter now at the start of this season than I have for some years."

Essex's new overseas player, the Australian Stuart Law, said he is looking forward to his first taste of county cricket. "I am here on the recommendation of Allan Border and Mark Waugh who both played for Essex," he said. "I regard this as a great opportunity to forward my career."

Hopefully, I will perform well enough to win a place in the Australian Test team."

Roland Leafevre, the Glamorgan all-rounder, has been forced to retire because of pelvic damage suffered during an Sunday League match against Durham last July.

"The injury Roland sustained is a very serious one," John Fairclough, Glamorgan's consultant surgeon, said. "He tore an abductor tendon in his groin and the original scan showed some very extensive damage."

His bowling action works against him in that it puts a great deal of pressure on the pelvic region."

Leafevre joined Glamorgan from Somerset in 1993 and played a major part in the county winning the Sunday League title for the first time that summer. He did not play again last season but was a member of the Dutch side in the World Cup, playing in two group matches.

"Naturally, I am extremely disappointed," he said. "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Glamorgan and I would like to record my thanks to everyone at the club for their continuing support."

Leafevre took 149 first-class wickets and scored 1,494 runs during his six seasons in county cricket.

Hallett has no doubts over England's future

Rugby Union
STEVE BALE

It is a strange sort of friendship that threatens expulsion, but the Rugby Football Union's friends in the home unions could today reveal whether they really are going to invite England to leave the Five Nations' Championship because their union no longer wishes to be encumbered by the Welsh, Scots and Irish in negotiating its television contract.

The RFU, embroiled in a domestic dispute with its leading clubs, does not know whether to act innocent or indignant at such an eventuality. After all the French, even if for obvious linguistic reasons, have always had their own contract - and they have not been expelled from the Five Nations since 1931.

Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, insisted he was not being ironic when he said yesterday of the Anglo-Welsh relationship: "It is always friendly and co-operative and we speak regularly at all levels." But the fact remains that at the weekend Vernon Pugh, chairman of the Welsh Rugby Union and the International Board, announced his expectation that England would have to leave the championship.

Selective media leakages moved the threat a stage further by questioning whether the RFU would be permitted to stage its 13 allocated World Cup fixtures, including both semi-finals, in 1999 when Wales will be hosts with matches taking place in each of the five nations.

Today's statement by Bob Weighill, secretary of the home unions' and Five Nations' committees and a former RFU secretary, will show whether any of this was more than a bargaining ploy. The RFU began by asking for a rise from 25 to 60 per cent.

The RFU's demand was a sum likely to exceed £150m compared with the £27m the BBC paid last time.

The unneighbourliness overshadowed yesterday's official launch of the 1999 World Cup at Cardiff City Hall and announcement of the various routes by which all bar the hosts and last year's top three, South Africa, New Zealand and France, will have to qualify.

England, Scotland and Ireland will host the three final European qualifying tournaments, each involving two other teams, in November 1998.

When questioning at yesterday's launch turned to the purported threat to England, Pugh made one oddly ambivalent remark concerning the share-out of matches for the '99 tournament. "We have an arrangement with the members of the Five Nations and while they remain members of the Five Nations' Championship that arrangement will continue," he said.

The RFU had been hostilely received at Sunday's Five Nations meeting in Dublin and Hallett is less sanguine privately than he is in public. "All we've done is make a statement that the RFU wishes to negotiate its own TV rights," he said.

"We are members of the Five Nations. We intend to remain members of the Five Nations, and I know of no plans to expel us. Membership of the Five Nations is not incumbent on television negotiating rights. I can't see what the connection between membership of the Five Nations and World Cup is."

The process to produce 17 World Cup qualifiers consists of 138 matches involving 66 unions played in five geographical zones - Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and Pacific. The first matches will involve Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Brazil, to be played by this December.

The last will be in the three-team tournaments at Twickenham, Murrayfield and Lansdowne Road 23 months later.

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